

Nikola Sedlak

# WINNING

with the **MODERN**  
**LONDON SYSTEM**

A complete opening repertoire  
for White against 1.d4 d5



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**Swipe left for next chapter**

NIKOLA SEDLAK

## Winning with the Modern London System

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A complete opening repertoire for White against 1.d4 d5



Cover designer

Piotr Pielach

Cover photo

Big Ben photo by Ingram Image

Typesetting

Piotr Pielach <[www.i-press.pl](http://www.i-press.pl)>

First edition 2016 by Chess Evolution

*Winning with the Modern London System. A complete opening repertoire for White against 1.d4 d5*

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ISBN 978-83-944290-9-6

All sales or enquiries should be directed to Chess Evolution

ul. Smutna 5a, 32-005 Niepolomice, Poland

e-mail: [info@chess-evolution.com](mailto:info@chess-evolution.com)

website: [www.chess-evolution.com](http://www.chess-evolution.com)



# KEY TO SYMBOLS

= Equality or equal chances

± White has a slight advantage

∓ Black has a slight advantage

± White is better

∓ Black is better

+ - White has a decisive advantage

- + Black has a decisive advantage

∞ unclear

∞ with compensation

↔ with counterplay

↑ with initiative

→ with an attack

Δ with the idea

□ only move

N novelty

! a good move

!! an excellent move

? a weak move

?? a blunder

! ? an interesting move

? ! a dubious move

+ check

# mate

# PREFACE

Every chess player is searching for a suitable opening repertoire throughout his career. In this search the player is trying to find a playing style and a position type that will suit his sensibility and character.

I was likewise looking for openings based on my playing style in which I would feel free and comfortable while playing, without fear that I would be caught in unfamiliar territory facing my opponent's theoretical superiority. I began my search in the earliest days, actually from my junior years when I played 1.e4 as White, striving strictly for mainlines in which I was achieving solid results.

However, over time, the computer world has conquered chess and I realized that 1.e4 was too concrete for me. It was not allowing my playing style to express itself and I was not reaching positions in which I could show my true face. Also, I realized that 1.e4 couldn't be played without thorough computer analysis, and I must admit that I still prefer the approach of an older generation; one which favours a chess book and a board in front of them and which likes to hold pieces in their hands while working on the development of their chess skills.

So, my opinion about 1.e4 slowly began to change. At the age of 22 I decided to seriously focus on a study of 1.d4. However, I encountered one, should I say, obstacle — and that was 1...d5! Just to mention that 1...♘f6 wasn't a problem, because the positions arising weren't symmetrical, while 1...d5 followed by the Slav Defence and the Queen's Gambit was becoming an 'impenetrable fortress' which could be credited largely to Grandmaster Vladimir Kramnik.

I wish to emphasize that the problem for me at that time wasn't being unable to find an advantage for White, because I think that if Black plays the opening phase precisely White can't reach an advantage in almost any system (except when Black is using openings proven to be incorrect), but the bigger issue was with the types of positions that were reached, which didn't allow me to be free and creative. Also, the arising positions were deeply analysed by professional chess players with the help of very strong computer programs.

Continuing to explore 1.d4 I got an idea to check what one of my favourite players — Anthony Miles — had in his repertoire against 1...d5. Two games that left a strong impression on me were Miles — Minasian, Ohrid 2001 and Miles — Dominguez, Capablanca Memorial 2001. In those games Miles played 2.♗f4, which is known as the "London System".

Back then I didn't know much about that system, and actually didn't care to know, because I saw mostly weaker players playing the "London System" and it seemed to me that they were using it with the purpose of achieving a draw. It was precisely that attitude I had beforehand that helped me understand that maybe a great number of other players also had the same attitude, that they were underestimating the system and that maybe it should be analysed in greater detail and given a new meaning. I began to see that it could also serve as a very strong psychological weapon if studied well.

The "London System" wasn't played very often at the top level, it was relatively unexplored and it was precisely those conclusions that showed me that the effort should be made to thoroughly analyse this opening.

The move 2.♗f4 is pretty underestimated and is not considered serious enough, but I think it's completely natural and logical. White's structure is natural, with positions similar to those from Slav Defence and Stonewall with reverse colours, but with the problem of the inactive bishop, the so called "bad bishop" solved at the very beginning! By the way, I successfully played both of those openings as Black. Having that experience with the black pieces in mind, the study of the "London System" wasn't a problem for me because I was already well-acquainted with the ideas and types of positions arising.

At the beginning of my exploration of this opening's secrets I didn't know if adequate literature about this system existed, so I relied mainly on the database, while I learned the most through my praxis and of course through analysis of my own games. The games of Croatian Grandmaster Vlatko Kovacevic were also a great influence on me. Help from my friends in analysis of the system was also very useful, so I often exchanged experiences and ideas with top Hungarian Grandmaster Ferenc Berkes, and I will take the liberty to say that it was a fruitful collaboration because I'm

personally satisfied with the results achieved using the studied material.

10 years after my first game in the “London System” — with more than 50 games played against many Grandmasters among others and with an overall performance over 2700 — I felt free and confident enough to distil my experience into a book, its purpose being to serve as a guide for other players searching for an opening which they will play with pleasure. The ideas and ways of treating these positions have changed over time, and I put an emphasis on that which I currently consider to be best for White.

This is the reason why the book is called *Winning with the Modern London System*. I have to mention that 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f4 or 2.♘f3 with ♗f4 are also known as the London System. Personally, I'm not a fan of the London System against 1...♘f6, especially when Black arranges his pieces as he would in the King's Indian Defence. The position of the bishop on f4 seems adequate to me only when black plays 1...d5, in which case it has a very important role to play, as opposed to when Black has the option of playing ...d6 when the London set-up seems less logical and I don't believe in it.

So I chose to deal with the London System only against 1...d5 in this book!

# INTRODUCTION

In this book the London System opening is presented using all of the most important games with thorough comments, through which the readers will have the opportunity to understand the essence of this opening, which in my opinion has a future ahead of it and a lot of space for growth and development.

I would like to mention that the book comprises the most important parts of this opening, and also the ideas reached through the experience of playing games in tournaments, as well as the positions analysed in collaboration with Grandmaster Ferenc Berkes. But there should always be room, if a player chooses this opening, for some new interesting idea during the game itself, because either side (both White and Black) can encounter something new and unexplored in a relatively early phase of the game. Therein lies the beauty of chess: creativity, freedom to mix things up, and an abundance of possibilities and ideas for a game of high quality.

I'm certain that this book will be very helpful to most chess players in building a strong foundation in order to be able to use this opening in praxis. At this point it's important to say a few words about the move order. Many players enter this system with 2.♘f3 and 3.♗f4. Positions reached after 2.♘f3 are usually identical to those with 2.♗f4, but that move order is actually less elastic and it narrows down White's options. It is for this reason that I am promoting the development of the bishop on the 2nd move as the main move order. Those differences in options will be the most obvious in chapters 2 and 4.

In the process of writing this book the biggest problems for me arose from the different move orders used in the analysed games. In order to avoid confusing the readers, for each chapter there's an introduction where the correct move order can be seen clearly. I'm using this opportunity to point out to readers that they definitely shouldn't skip the introductions to the chapters!

At the present moment the London System is becoming increasingly popular at the top level — even in 'classical' tournament games, although it's much more often seen in rapid. Currently the top players who use it most frequently are American Grandmaster Gata Kamsky and Russian Grandmaster Boris Grachev, while other top players occasionally have it in their repertoire, usually using it as a surprise weapon. Among them are Magnus Carlsen, Vladimir Kramnik and others. Also a great contribution to this system came from the French Grandmaster Eric Prié, who plays it in a very original and active manner.

One way or the other, what's important are the facts which I obtained through my study of the London System and which I will prove in this book with a thorough analysis of games. I will show that this system is fully deserving of your attention for analysing and playing, that it's unjustly neglected in comparison with other openings and also that it gives players myriad interesting positions on the board, free and creative play, with lots of space for further growth and improvement.

# THE NARROW PATH OF ADVERSITY: A BRIEF HISTORY

Searching through the database, the first name I found in connection to this opening, and who played it with the white pieces, was James Mason (19.11.1849–12.01.1905) A great number of his games can be found between 1876 and 1894. A little is known about this “forgotten” chess player from the XIX century. He was born in Kilkenny, Ireland. It’s interesting that he was adopted as a child and that his real name is in fact unknown. James Mason was the name given to him by the family which adopted him and with which he later moved to America in 1861. He was a writer and a journalist by profession, while chess was his hobby. James Mason left his first mark on the chess scene by winning the American Chess Congress in Philadelphia and also a tournament in New York. During the time he was actively playing he was one of the strongest players in the world, behind the strongest — Wilhelm Steinitz. He made a great contribution to the development of theory and even the “London System” was previously known as the “Mason Variation”. He also wrote several books on chess, and the most popular were The Principles of Chess Theory and Practice (1894), The Art of Chess (1895), Chess Openings (1897) and Social Chess (1900).

**J. Mason — J. M. Hanham [D02]**

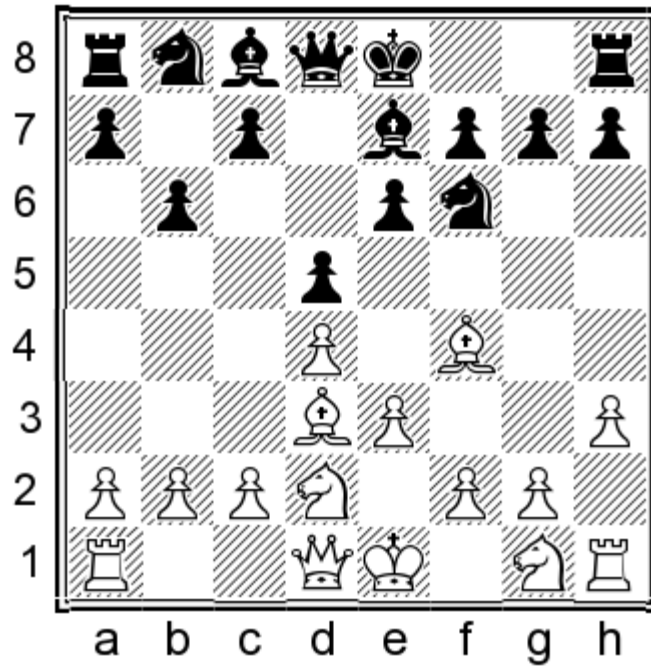
USA–06.Congress New York (13), 1889

This game shows that chess classics are still very important nowadays, especially in the development of young players who wrongly skips this part of chess, relying just on the assistance of computers. Over 130 years ago Mason James was playing the London System using ideas which are nowadays playable too, even though we live in the time of strong engines!

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 ♗f6 3.e3 e6 4.♘d3 ♙e7

In the 19th century the Queens Gambit was one of the main openings against 1.d4 and Black is also aims for that set-up here. Nowadays it is considered a passive set-up for Black.

5.♗d2 b6 6.h3



A limp move, but Mason wanted to preserve his Bishop. The modern reaction would be 6. ♖g3 without fear of 6... ♗h5 (6... ♗b7 7. ♗e5 ♗bd7 8. ♜f3! and the square e4 is covered!)

7. ♗e5! and after 7... f6?

(7... ♗d7 8. g4 ♗hf6 9. g5 ♗h5 10. ♗f1! → with ♗g3 next)

8. ♗g5!+- comes with an indefensible attack! 8... g6 9. ♗xh7! ♖f7 10. g4 ♗g7

(10... ♜xh7 11. gxh5 ♜xh5 12. ♜g1 f5 13. ♗f3±)

11. ♗xf6! ♗xf6 12. ♜f3 g5 13. h4 ♗d7 14. 0-0-0 ♖e7 15. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16. hxg5 ♗d7 17. ♜g3+- with many threats such as ♗f3-♗h4 or f4-f5

**6... ♗b7 7. ♗gf3 ♗bd7 8. 0-0 0-0**

For Black 8... ♗e4 is almost always good, to close down the diagonal b1-h7! In the 19th century, players learned and built theory on their own mistakes, without books and databases.

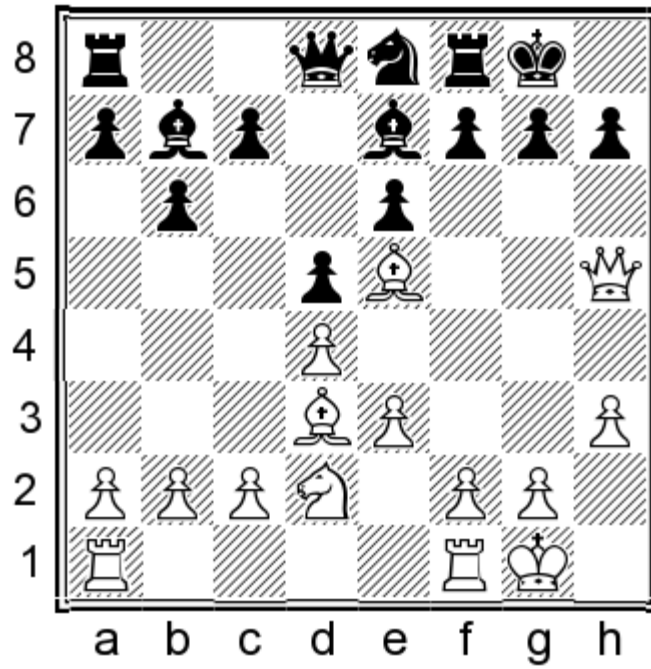
**9. ♗e5 ♗xe5**

It also works here! 9... ♗e4!

**10. ♗xe5 ♗e8?!**

Black had no reason to play so passively. Consistent was 10... c5 11. c3 ♗d6 12. f4 ♗e4! = or the now well-known 10... ♗e4!

**11. ♜h5!±**

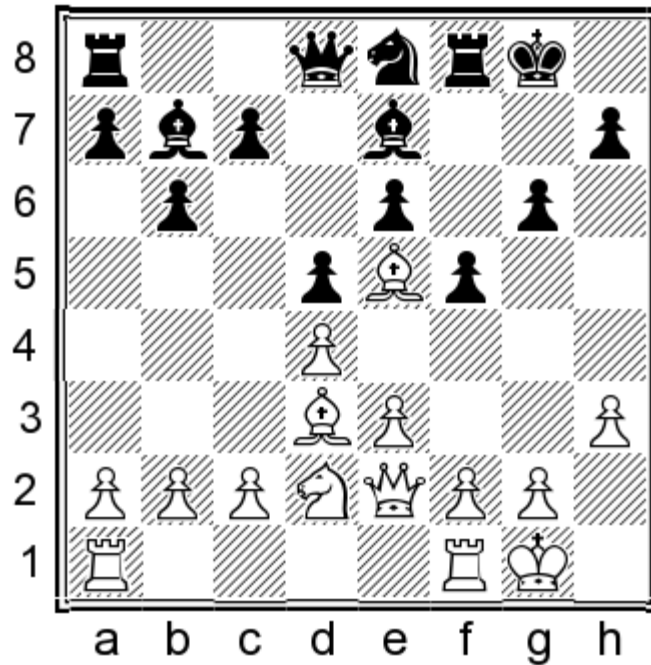


A typical plan in the London System also used nowadays by many strong players. White is trying to provoke weaknesses in Black's position, especially around his king.

11...g6 12.♞e2 f6 13.♙h2 f5

Prevents e4, but makes a weak point on e5!

14.♙e5!



A nice positional move. Firstly White puts his bishop on its most active square and then continues with a typical kingside plan!

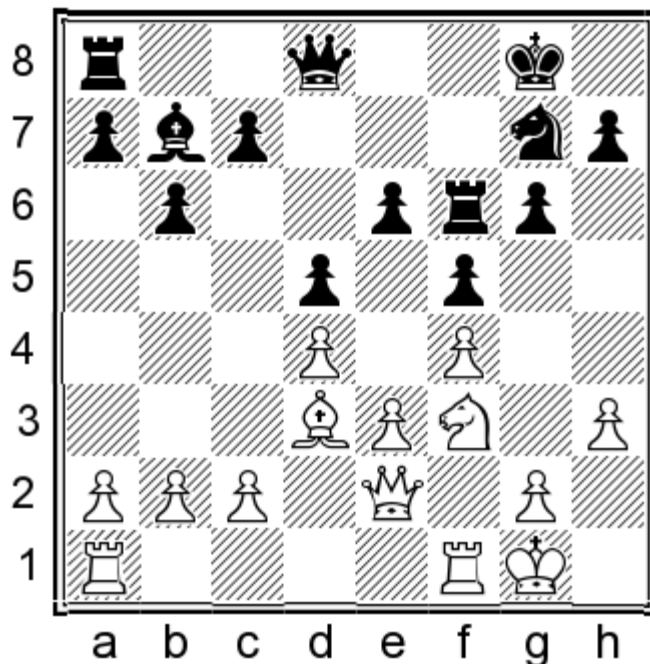
14...♙f6?!

It was a bad idea to head for the exchange of bishops after which the dark squares will be permanently weak! Much better was 14...♖d6 with ...♘f7 next.

**15.f4 ♘g7?**

A very bad place for the knight. Much better and more natural was again 15...♖d6

**16.♙xf6 ♖xf6 17.♘f3±**



After a series of inaccurate moves from Black, White is now positionally winning and all of Black's pieces stand awkwardly.

**17...a5 18.♘e5 ♖f8 19.g3**

The position has a closed character so time is not a key factor, but anyway I don't support wasting time! It was better to play 19.g4± immediately.

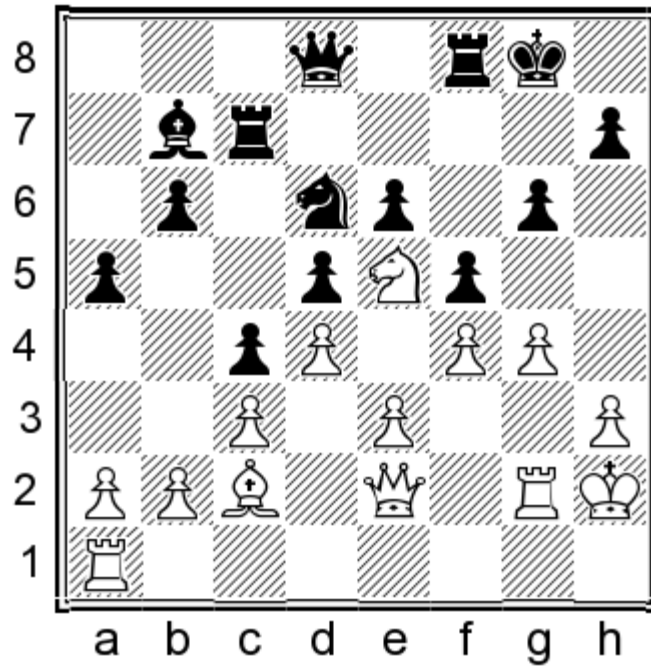
**19...♘e8**

Finally Black improves his knight's position!

**20.♖f2 ♘d6 21.♖g2 c5 22.c3 c4?**

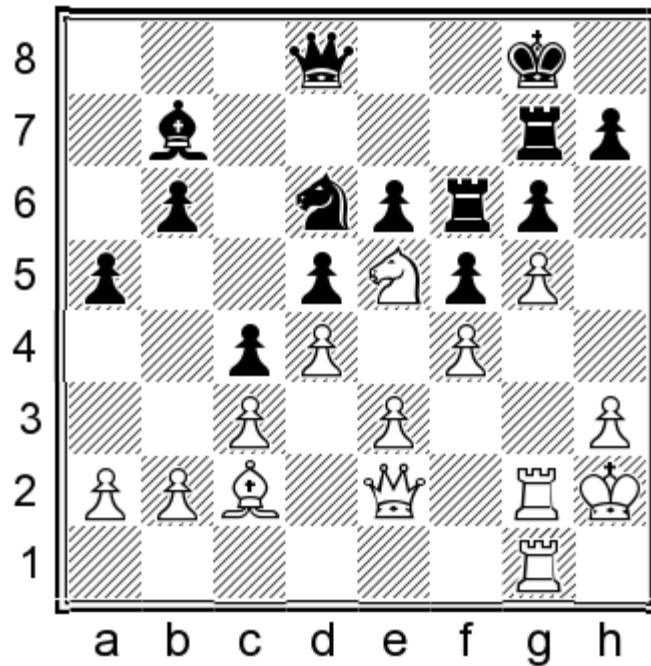
Another positional mistake! By closing the center, White has a free hand on the kingside! In many open tournaments, and also in my praxis, I encountered this bad move from low-rated players. Much better was 22...♙c8 with the idea being to exchange the bad bishop with ...♙a6!

**23.♙c2 ♖c8 24.♙h2 ♖c7 25.g4!**



Finally, after lengthy preparation, White obtains what he wanted.

25...♖g7 26.♖ag1 ♜f6 27.g5?±

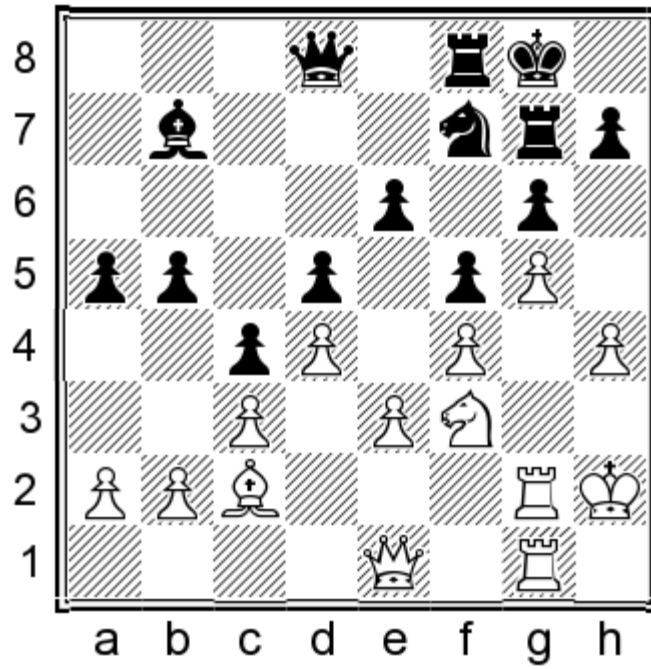


A very risky decision which could have cost him a half-point. Closing the position always brings the risk of a complete blockade. I prefer 27.h4 ♜f8 28.♔h3± with the idea of h5

27...♜f8 28.♖e1!

White is careful! 28.h4? h5!= leads to a complete blockade!

28...b5 29.h4 ♜f7 30.♜f3!

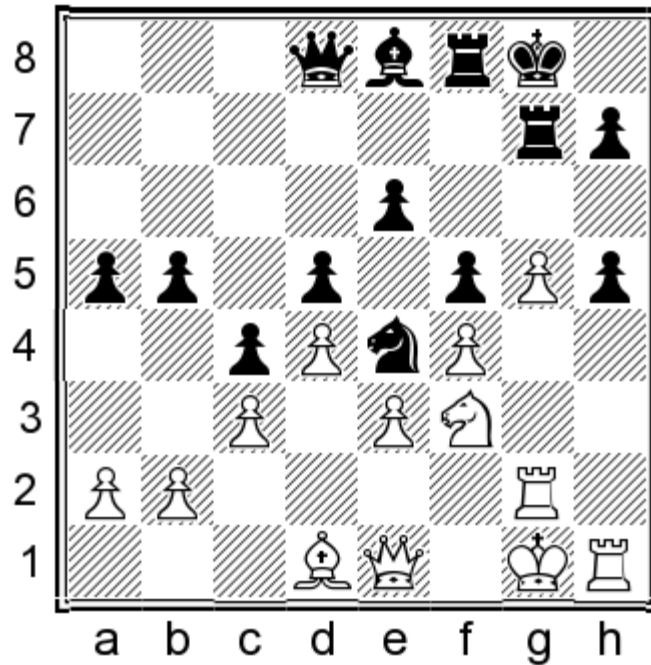


Of course! By exchanging knights White loses the chance to make a break-through!

**30...♙c6 31.♙d1 ♙e8 32.h5 ♘d6 33.♖h1 gxh5?!**

Black loses patience! He should search for an escape with 33...♔f7! 34.hxg6+ hxg6 35.♘e5+ ♔e7 36.♔g3 ♘f7 37.♖h7 ♖fg8 and it's not clear how to break into Black's position.

**34.♔g1 ♘e4?**



Pseudo-activity with the knight! It is needed to help in defense, so 34...♙g6 35.♘e5 ♘f7 36.♙xh5 ♘xe5 37.dxe5 ♖b6± and a draw is not so far off!

**35.♘e5 ♔h8 36.♙xh5+-**

Now nothing can save the black monarch!

36...♖fg8 37.♙xe8 ♜xe8 38.♖h6 ♞e7 39.♞h4 b4 40.cxb4 axb4 41.♖h2 c3 42.♜g6+!

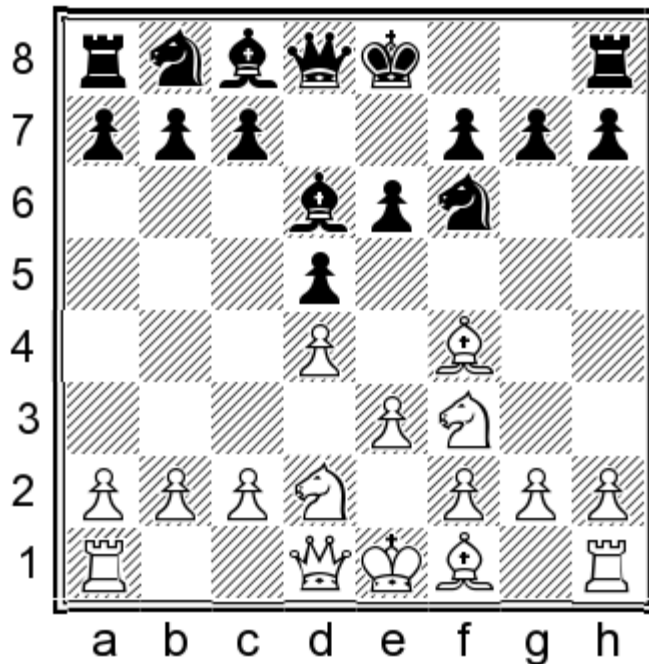
Conclusion: Nowadays, almost 130 years later, White uses the same plan on the kingside.

1-0

**A. Rubinstein — S. Tartakower**  
BCF Congress, London (13), 1922

In 1922, 17 years after James Mason's death, a very strong tournament called London BCF Congress was played, and it was won convincingly by 3rd World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca with score of 13 points from 15 games without defeat, in front of other elite players Alekhine, Vidmar, Rubinstein, Bogoljubow, Reti, Tartakower, Maroczy, Euwe etc. In that tournament the system with 1.d4 and ♙f4 was used very often and after that this opening was renamed from "Mason Variation" to the "London System". In this game the famous top player in the beginning of the 20 century Akiba Rubinstein, used for that time very original plan, where he destruct own pawn structure in order to achieve the other plusses in position, and on nice way he overplay his also well-known opponent Savielly Tartakower!

1.d4 ♜f6 2.♜f3 d5 3.♙f4 e6 4.e3 ♙d6 5.♜bd2!?

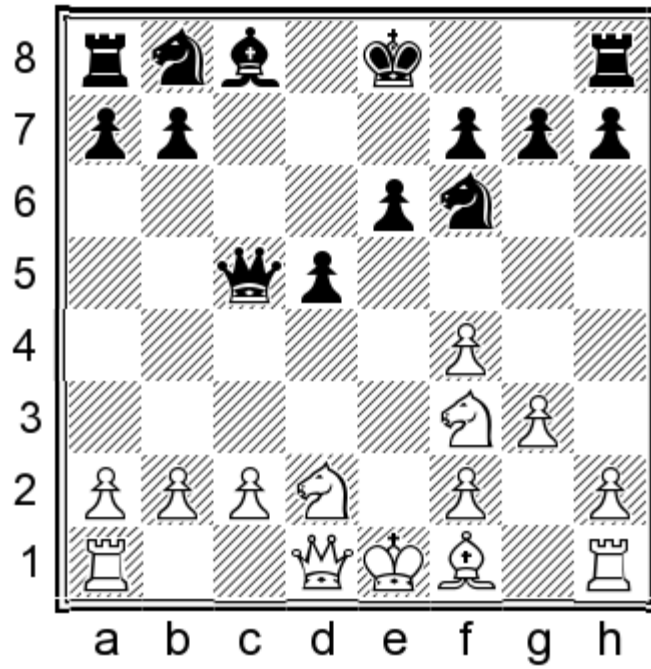


An interesting treatment of the position. Allowing a partial destruction of his pawn structure, White takes greater control of the e5 square.

5...♙xf4 6.exf4 c5

This is not a mistake, but I prefer 6...0-0 7.♙d3 b6 with the idea of ...♙a6 and later ...c5. to have available, after dxc5, bxc5!

7.dxc5 ♜c7 8.g3 ♜xc5?!



8...Qbd7 was a better option with the idea being to exchange one pair of knights, e.g. 9.Qb3 (9.b4 b6 10.cxb6 axb6) 9...0-0 10.Qd3 Qxc5 11.Qxc5 Qxc5 and the position is about equal.

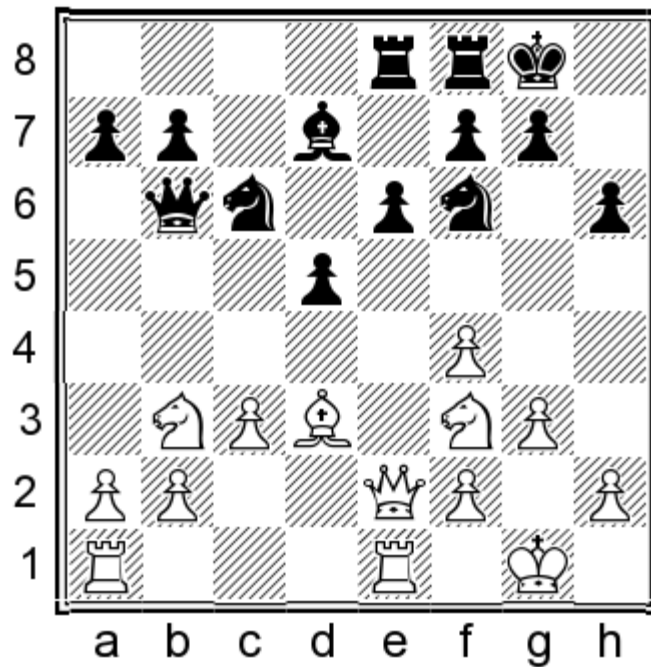
### 9.Qd3 Qc6 10.c3

Preventing ...Qb4 and creating a post for the knight on d4.

### 10...0-0 11.0-0 h6 12.Qb3 Qb6 13.Re1±

Black doesn't have an active plan, while White is controlling all the important squares in the center.

### 13...Qd7 14.Qe2 Qae8?



The wrong plan! Correct was 14...a5! with ...a4 next, aiming to exchange one pair of knights.

15.♖e5 ♜xe5 16.fxe5 ♜h7?

Tartakower resorts to passive play, which was not in his style! More active was to offer a pawn with 16...♜e4!  
17.♚e3!

(After 17.♙xe4 dxe4 18.♚xe4 ♙c6± Black getting some hopes with active Bishop!)

Entering into the endgame where Black lacks serious counterplay. 17...♚xe3 18.♞xe3 f5 19.exf6 gxf6!

(19...♜xf6 20.♞ae1±)

20.♙xe4 dxe4 21.♞xe4 e5 and a pawn down in the endgame Black can hope for salvation thanks to his active bishop.

17.h4 f5

Black is more-or-less forced to play this move.

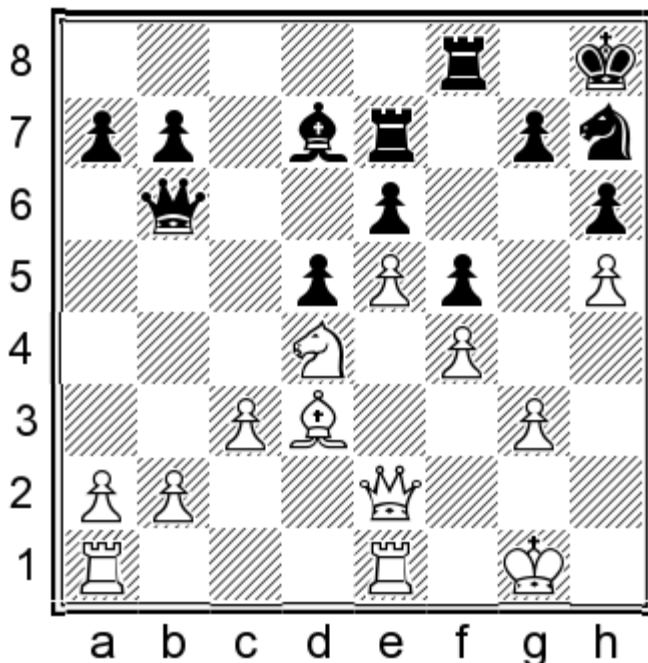
For example 17...f6 18.♚c2 f5 19.♜d4±

18.♜d4 ♞e7 19.f4

In this game, like in the previous, Black has a problem with his “French bishop”.

19...♙h8 20.h5!

Black is left without counterplay and White has enough time to prepare the g4 break.



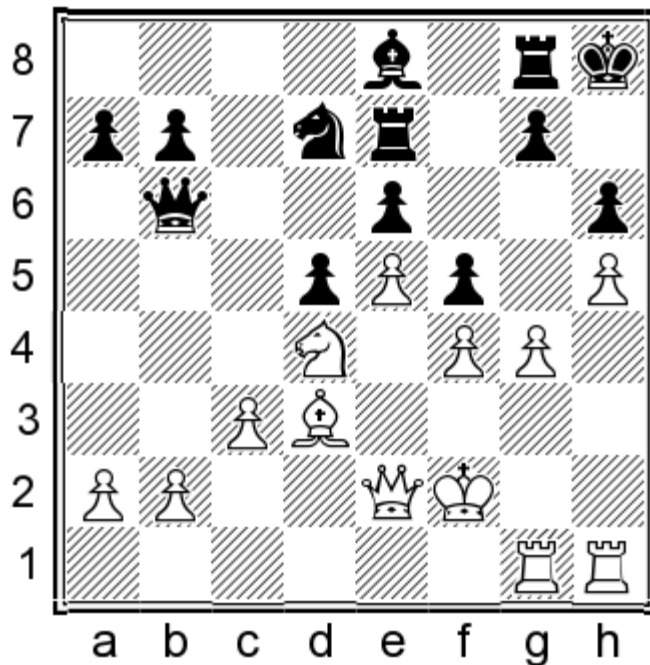
20...♞g8 21.♙f2?!

Rubinstein starts to lose the thread of the game! Now Black can consolidate his position. The safest move was 21.♙h1! ♜f8 22.♞g1 ♙e8 23.♞g2 ♜d7 24.♞ag1 ♜c5 25.♙b1± and g4 is coming next move!

21...♜f8!

Now Black finds the nice knight route via d7-c5-e4

22. ♖h1 ♙e8 23. ♖ag1 ♞d7 24. g4!?



White continues with his plan! Also interesting was the prophylactic 24.b4! and although it looks like a weakening and a very 'responsible' move, White would prevent counterplay (with ...♞c5) and after 24...♞b8 25. ♖e3 ♞c6 26. ♖c1 White has a small but long-term advantage.

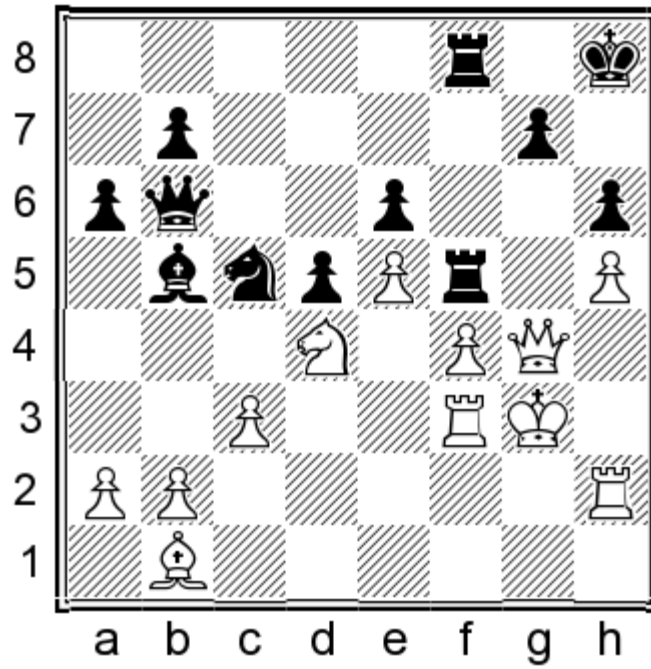
24... ♞c5 25. ♙b1 fxe4 26. ♙g3?!

An adventurous move, maybe in time-trouble, but it doesn't have a big negative effect on White's happiness! 26. ♖xg4 was good enough 26... ♞e4+ 27. ♙g2± with the idea of taking on e4 at some point.

26... ♖f8 27. ♖h2

A clever move! Freeing the queen from defending the b2 pawn.

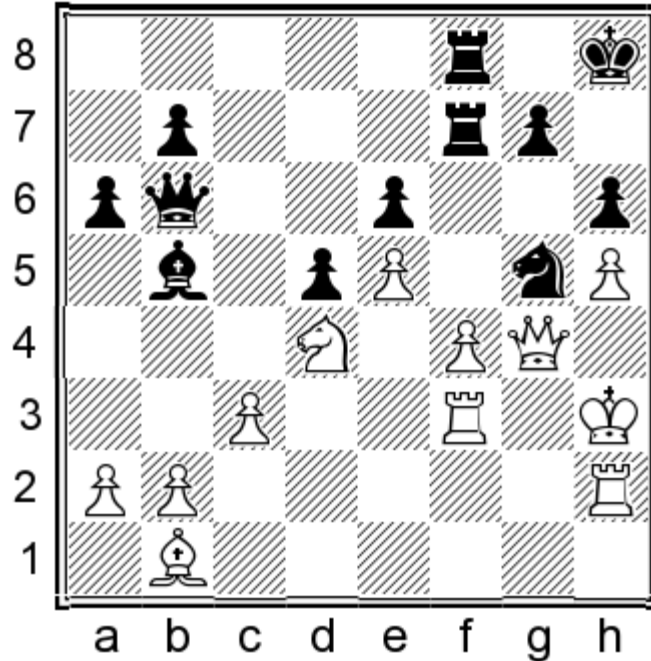
27... ♖ef7 28. ♖f1 a6 29. ♖xg4 ♙b5 30. ♖f3 ♖f5??+-



A 'panic' move; now we can be sure they were in time-trouble! Black could still save the game, although with less than easy moves! 30...♖e4+ 31.♔h3

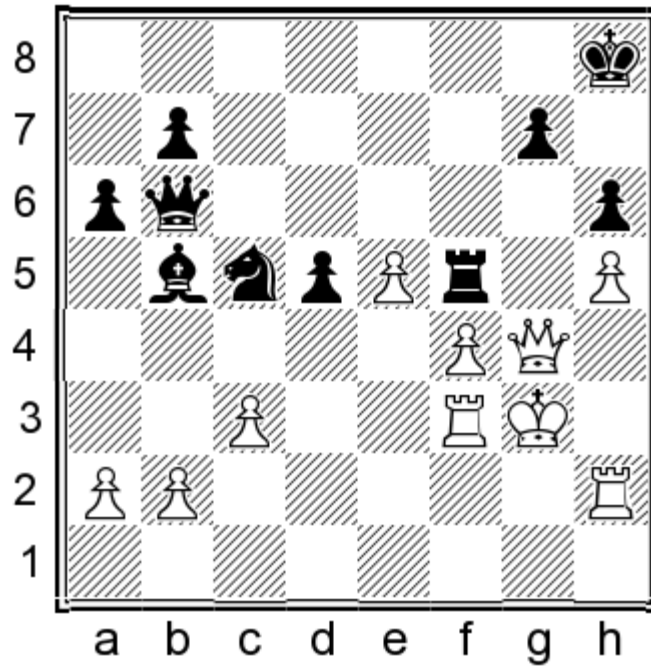
(31.♕xe4? dxe4 32.♖e3 ♖xf4 33.♗xf4 ♖xf4 34.♔xf4 ♕c4+)

31...♖g5+!



32.fxg5 ♖xf3+ 33.♖xf3 ♗e3 34.♔g3 hxg5 35.h6 g6 36.♖f2 ♖f4 37.♗xe6 ♖xf3+! 38.♖xf3 ♗g1+ 39.♔h3 ♗h1±

31.♖xf5 exf5 32.♕xf5 ♖xf5?



Black misses his last practical chance. An interesting try was 32...♖e4+!? after which White has to find difficult moves 33.♔h4!

(33.♔g2 ♕e2±; 33.♔h3 ♜xf5! 34.♜xf5 ♜g1±; 33.♕xe4 dxe4 34.♞ff2 ♜e3+ 35.♔g2 ♜d3 36.♜g6!±)

33...♜c5 34.♕xe4 dxe4 35.♞ff2 e3 36.♞fg2 ♞f7 37.♔g3 ♞d7 38.♞h1 ♞d2 39.♞e1+—

**33.♜xf5 ♖e4+ 34.♔g2 ♕e2 35.♜g6!**

Being a double-exchange up, it is not a bad idea to give back one to simplify the position.

**35...♕xf3+ 36.♔xf3 ♜b5 37.♜g2**

Still White needs to be careful not to blunder into some perpetual checks.

**37...♜d3+ 38.♔g4 g5 39.♜f3**

Now it's over and the rest of game just shows the fighting spirit of the legendary Savielly!

**39...♜b1 40.fxg5 hxg5 41.h6 ♜g1+ 42.♞g2 ♜c5 43.♜f7 ♜c8+ 44.e6 ♜g8 45.♜xg8+ ♔xg8 46.♔f5**

**1-0**

# CHAPTER ONE

## CARO-KANN POSITION

One of the most important positions in this opening can also be reached via the Caro-Kann, 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♘f4. and a lot of games in this chapter will be from this move — order — which is not ours! A defined pawn structure, often called the Carlsbad structure, is well-known from the Queen's Gambit Declined, but here White has a tempo more and has solved the problem of the bishop. From f4 he can sometimes even prevent ideas like ...♞b8 and the subsequent minority attack. Usually Black players who choose this variation against the London have the Caro as their answer to 1.e4.

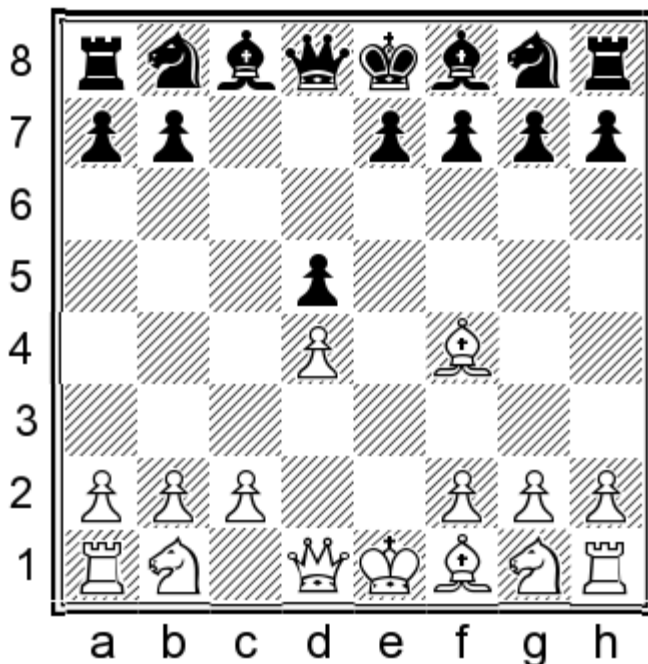
### 1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3

An interesting alternative in this position is 3.e4!? in the spirit of the Albin Counter Gambit. It's not a bad idea as a surprise weapon — but only for one, or at most two, games! In the book this continuation will not be processed because it does not contain the structures from the London System and therefore it's not in line with the theme of this book.

### 3...cxd4

An unpleasant reply comes after 3...♞b6?! 4.♗c3! ♗f6 5.♗b5 ♗a6 6.a4 and Black pieces are paralyzed on the queenside.

### 4.exd4



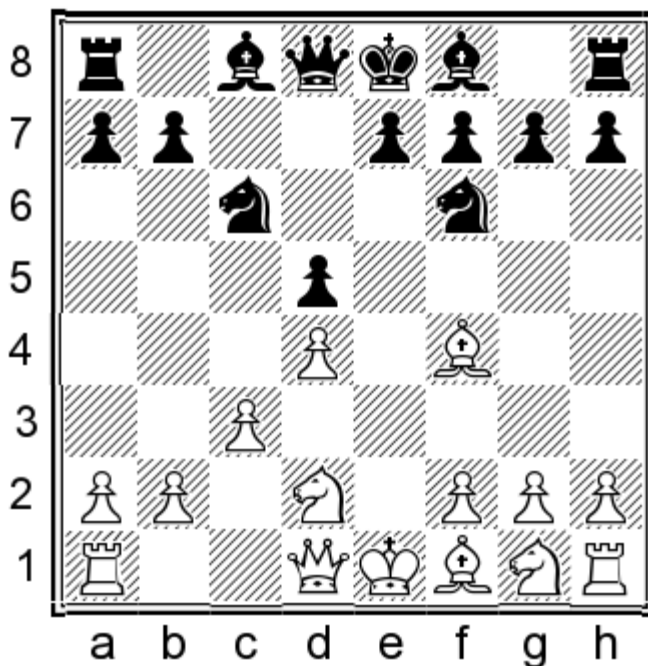
### 4...♗c6

4...♞b6?! also cannot be recommended here. After 5.♗c3! ♗f6 (5...♞xb2? 6.♗xd5!) 6.♗b5 ♗a6 7.a4 White has a long-term advantage. Black's biggest problem is the ♗a6. 7...♞xd4

### 5.c3 ♗f6

A very interesting alternative for Black is 5...♔f5!? with the idea to play a fast ...e6-...♔d6 and then to develop knight from g8 to e7! 6.♖d2 e6 7.♗gf3 ♕d6 8.♔xd6 ♖xd6 and now White has two interesting continuations 9.♔b5!? (or 9.♗h4!?) 9...♗ge7 (9...a6 10.♔xc6+! ♖xc6 11.♗e5 with the idea g4-h4) 10.♗h4!? This position has not been tested so much at GM level, but for sure it deserve attention.

### 6.♗d2!?



6.♔d3 with the plan of stopping ...♔f5 is most often played, but there is a simple way for Black to equalize. 6...♔g4 7.♖b3 ♖d7 8.♗d2 e6 9.♗gf3 ♕xf3 10.♗xf3 ♕d6 11.♔xd6 ♖xd6 12.0-0

(12.♖xb7 ♖b8 13.♖a6 ♖b6 14.♖a4 0-0 15.♔b5

(15. ♖c2 is too slow 15...e5↑)

15...♗e7 16.b3 ♗e4 17.♖c1 ♖c8 18.♔d3 ♗g6! with lots of compensation for Black.)

12...0-0 13.♖ae1

(13. ♖xb7 ♖ab8 14. ♖a6 ♖b6 15. ♖a4 ♖xb2=)

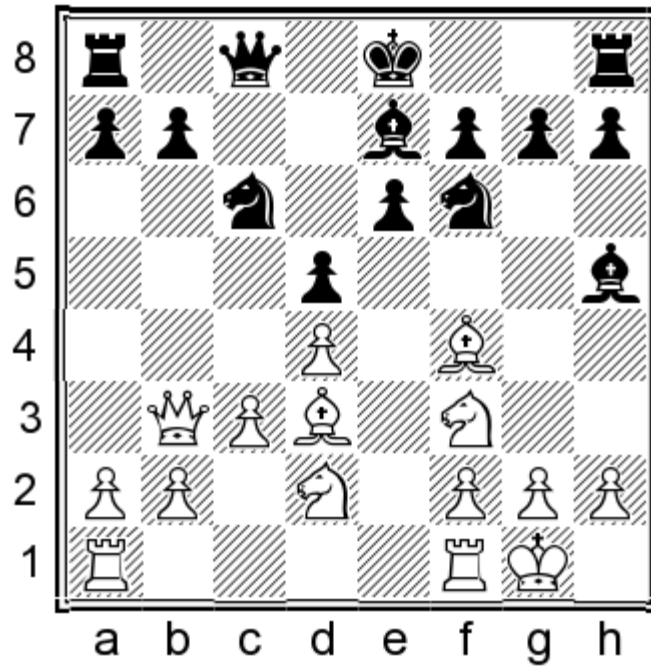
13...♖ab8=

### 6...♔f5

This has been the most popular move in the last few years. Earlier the main try was 6...♔g4 7.♖b3 ♖c8

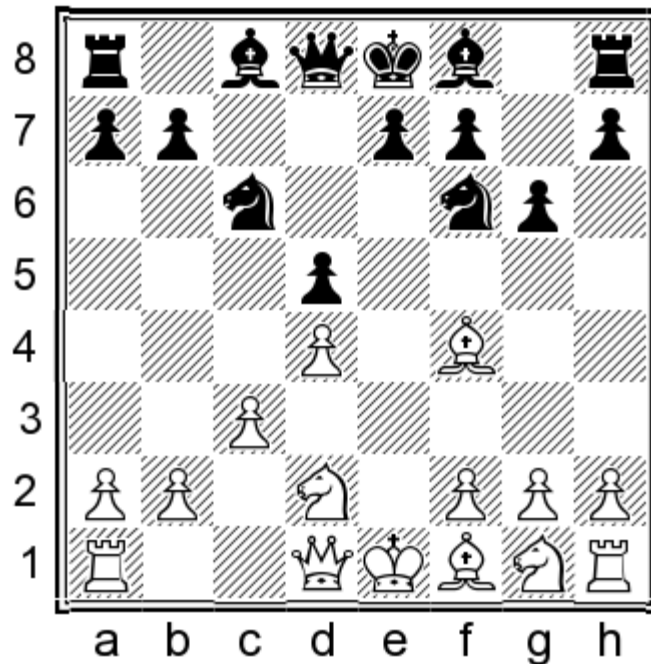
(7... ♗a5 8. ♖a4+ ♕d7 9. ♖c2±; 7... ♖d7?! 8. ♗gf3! with the unpleasant threat of ♗e5 and Black has to lose time with 8...a6 9. ♗e5 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♗g8 11.h3 ♔f5 12.g4! ♔g6 13.c4 e6 14.cxd5 exd5 15. ♔g2 ♗e7 16.0-0± and white is much better developed.)

8.♗gf3 e6 9.♔d3 ♔e7 10.0-0 ♔h5!



This is the critical position. See the game Piscopo-Macieja Ita ch team 2009. (10...0-0?! — game Browne W.-Larsen B. San Antonio 1972.) ;

6...g6



This continuation is played quite often. My opinion is that this plan for black is better in the position where the white knight stands on b1 and the bishop on d3. This may occur after 1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3 cxd4 4.exd4 ♖c6 5.c3 ♗f6 6.♘d3 g6. In this position the g6 plan makes more sense because Black has the option of playing ...♘f5 with the idea being to create a compact center. In the case of the diagram position White does not have to develop his bishop to d3, while Black does not gain anything special from ...♘f5 because it stares into space and he is later unable to play e6 (unless preparing it by weakening the kingside with the moves ...h6, ...g5 so that his bishop would not be trapped). Another problem for Black in this position is the bishop g7 which is permanently useless, and there is no realistic possibility of bringing him to life with ...e5 because White controls the center very well.

7.♔e2! this is the most precise move order!

(7.♘gf3 ♗h5 8.♙e3 ♚d6!∞; or 7.h3 ♗h5 8.♙h2 ♙h6!∞)

7...♙g7 8.h3 0-0! 9.♘gf3 ♙f5

(The Serbian grandmaster Ivan Ivanisevic tried another plan in this position but he couldn't find full equality

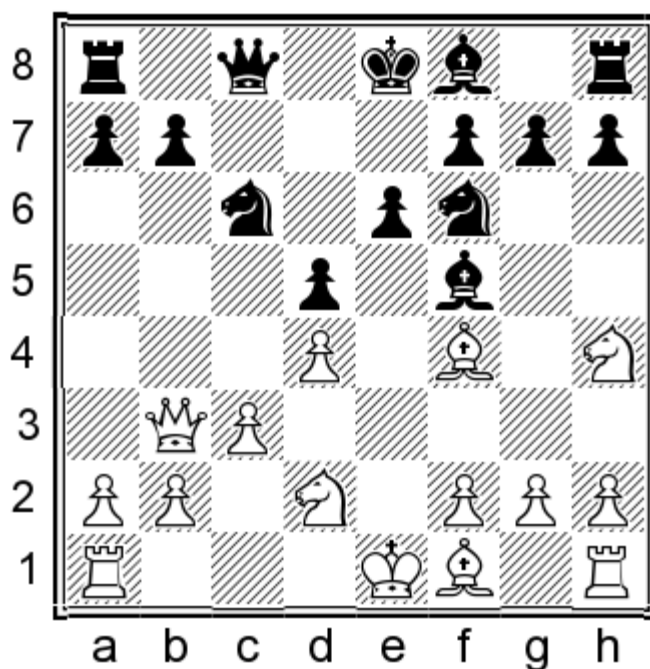
9...♗e8!? 10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♚e1 e6 12.♙f1 b6 13.♗e5 ♗e7 14.♚a4 ♙b7 15.♚d7!? ♚xd7 16.♗xd7 ♜fd8 17.♙xd6 ♜xd7 18.♙f4 ♗f5 19.a4± Popovic Milos-Ivanisevic Ivan SRB chT 2007.)

10.0-0

See Kovacevic. V—Mikhalchishin.A Pula 1980.

7.♘gf3 e6 8.♚b3 ♚c8 9.♗h4!

Only with this energetic approach can White count on an advantage. In this case, the advantage of the two bishops.



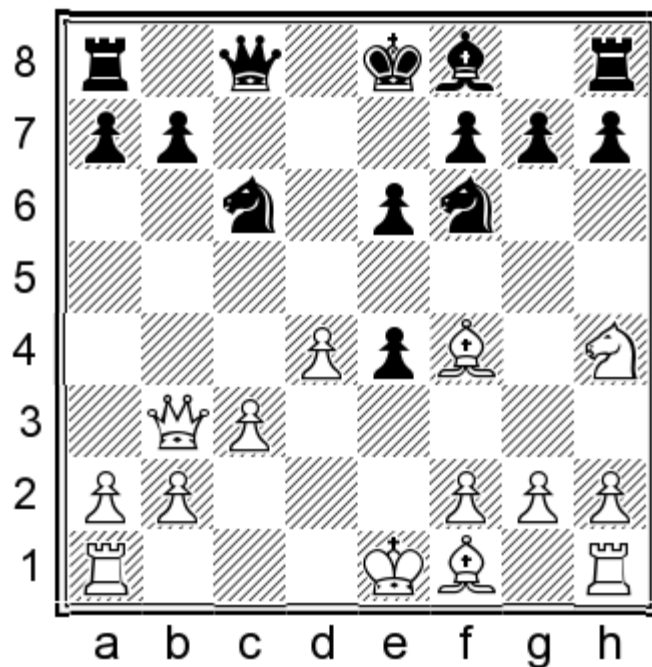
9...♙e4

Black also has other possibilities.

9...♙g6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.♙d3 ♗h5 12.♙e3 ♙d6 13.0-0-0!? (See the game Kramnik V.-Sjugirov S. Qatar Masters 2015).

9...♙g4 10.h3 ♙h5 11.g4 ♙g6 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.♙e2± (Berkes F.-Nguyen T. Zalakaros open 2016).

10.♗xe4 dx4!?



An original concept which heralds in non-standard positions. Black changes the structure and plays against the knight on h4. This is one of the most critical positions. More natural is 10...♖xe4 11.♗f3 ♘d6 12.♙xd6 ♗xd6 13.♙d3 ♕c7 14.♖c2 -see Carlsen M. -Wojtaszek R. Reykjavik 2015.

**11.g3 ♙e7 12.♗g2**

Aimed against ...♗d5.

**12...♗d5 13.♙d2 0-0 14.♙e2**

See the game Sedlak N.—Ivanov M. Aschach 2015.

**W. S. Browne (2530) — B. Larsen (2625)**

San Antonio San Antonio (8), 29.11.1972

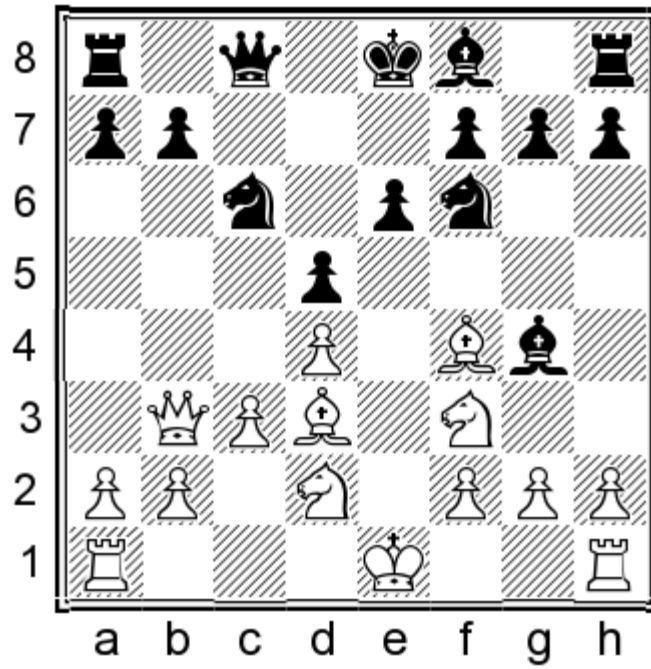
We will start with a pure classic. The game started as a Caro-Kann, the “dull” Exchange Variation. But in this clash of two great fighters there is no place for boredom. The critical moment in the opening was 10...0-0 which was premature and gave White the advantage of the bishop pair. White used that advantage and showed us the recipe of how White has to conduct the attack on the kingside!

**1.e4**

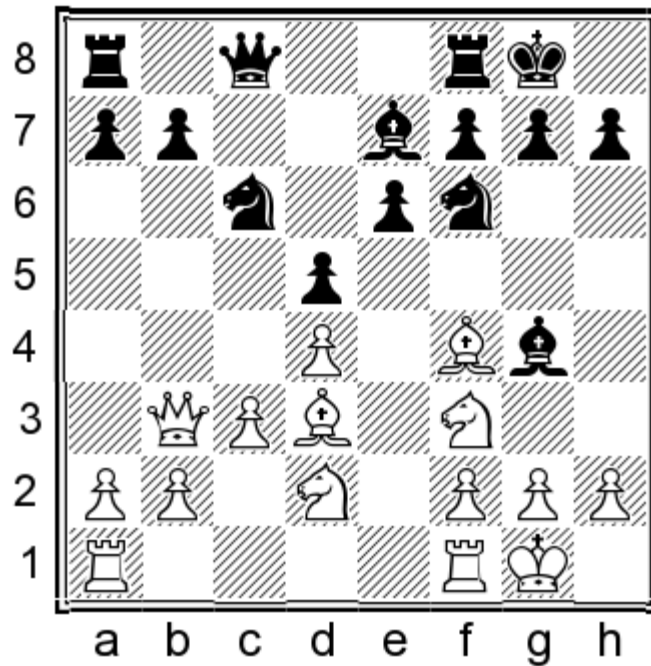
Our move order would be 1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 c5 3.e3 cxd4 4.exd4 ♗c6 5.c3 ♗f6 6.♗d2 ♙g4 7.♖b3 ♕c8 8.♗gf3 e6 9.♙d3

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♙d3 ♗c6 5.c3 ♗f6 6.♙f4 ♙g4 7.♖b3 ♕c8 8.♗d2 e6 9.♗gf3**

Now we have our position from the different move order. You always need to read the introductions to chapters carefully, because there are written our preferable move-orders.



9...♔e7 10.0-0 0-0?!



This natural move hands White the advantage of the two bishops. A better solution is 10...♔h5! as in the next game, with the idea of exchanging the important bishop on d3, as in our next game.

11.♖e5 ♔h5

The following moves show some of the problems in Black's position 11...♖xe5 12.dxe5 ♖d7 13.♖c2 h6 (13...g6 14.♖b3 ♔f5 15.♔xf5 gxf5 16.♖d4±) 14.♖b3 ♖c5 15.♖xc5 ♔xc5 16.♖ae1± Black's bishop on g4 cannot be exchanged on g6. White will exchange dark-squared bishops with ♔e3 and his rook can enter the game via e3-g3.

12.♖c2

Now ♖e5 is no longer possible anymore. White also has another interesting move with similar ideas to the game.  
 12.♙g5!? the idea is to prevent ...♗e5! 12...♗e8 13.♙xe7 ♖xe7 14.♚c2 ♙g6 15.♗xg6 hxg6 16.♗f3 ♗f6 17.♚e2 ♗c6  
 18.♞ae1 ♚c7 19.♗e5 ♗xe5 20.dxe5 ♗d7 21.h4→, Aagaard,J (2535)-Dittmar,P (2318) Arco 2007

**12...♙g6 13.♗xg6**

Of course. The bishop on d3 is a key minor piece in White's attack.

**13...hxg6**

Black's position is solid and without weaknesses, but he lacks any kind of counterplay. The plan for White is simple: move his pieces closer to the kingside and attack with g3-♙g2-h4-♞h1-h5.

**14.♗f3 ♗h5**

Moving the bishop from an important diagonal, with the idea of gaining more space for his own pieces!

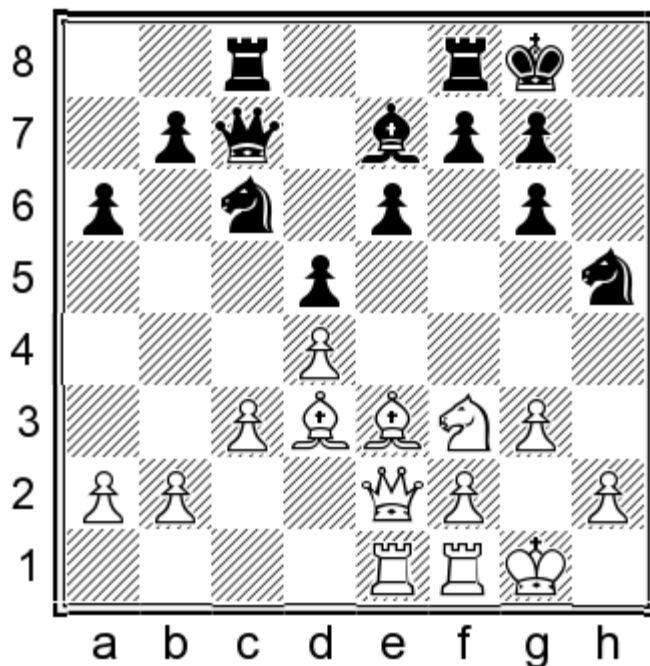
**15.♙e3 ♚c7 16.g3**

A standard move in these structures, covering the f4 square and at the same time preparing action against the Black king in the future with ♙g2-h4-♞h1!

**16...♞ac8 17.♚e2**

Avoiding ...♗b4.

**17...a6 18.♞ae1!**



Usually the ♞a1 goes to e1. His colleague from f1 is needed for action on the h-file.

**18...♞fe8 19.♙c1!**

Bishops are best at long range! Now, White has a dream position; all his pieces are on their optimal squares and ready for action.

19...♖f6 20.♗g5

In this structure, the knight on g5 is very unpleasant for Black. There are always sacrifices hanging in the air! The sacrifice 20.♙xg6 does not offer much to White after 20...fxg6 21.♚xe6+ ♔h8 22.♜f7 ♚d7 23.♜xg6 ♗e4

20...♙d6 21.f4!

A break with ...e5 cannot be allowed, otherwise Black could breathe more easily.

21...♗d7?!

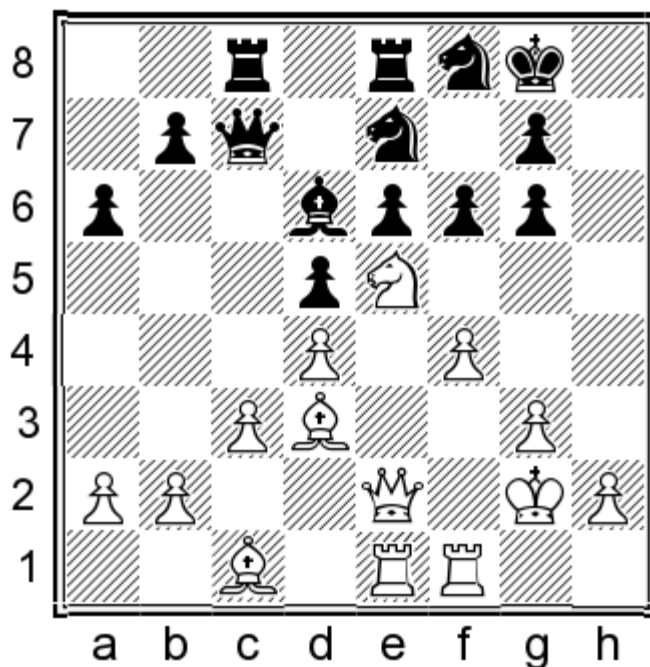
The knight on f6 makes it difficult to counter the plan with h4. Black should search for other options.

22.♗f3 ♗f8

Without any activity, Black can only sit and wait.

23.♗e5 ♗e7 24.♔g2 f6

Creating a weakness but White was already prepared to open the h-file with h4-h5.



25.♗f3 ♜b8 26.h4!

Everything is ready for the attack. White is going to open the h-file!

26...b5

The minority attack came too late!

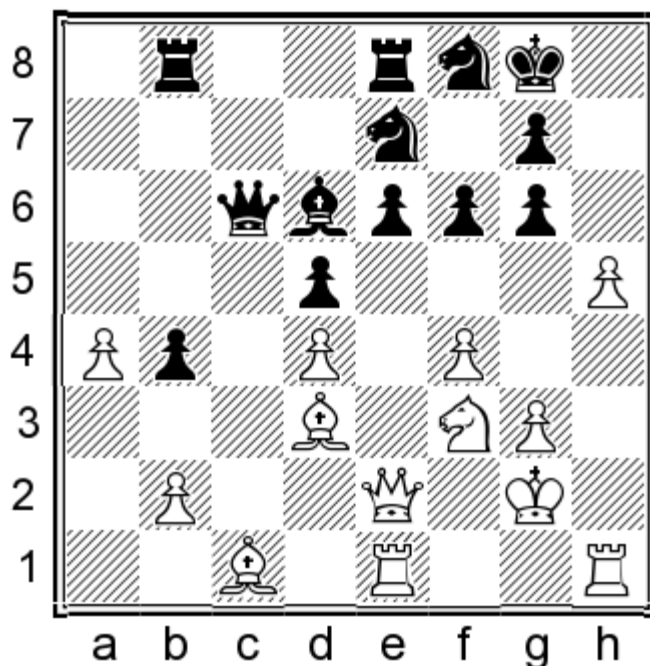
27.a3 ♗c6 28.♚c2 ♗e7 29.♚e2

The “Six time US Champion” was often in time-trouble during his career. Natural is 29.♖h1 with h5 next.

29...♜c6 30.♞h1 a5 31.h5 b4

Black is continuing to look for some counterplay! 31...gxh5?! just accelerates White’s attack after 32.♘e5! fxe5 33.fxe5 ♕xe5 (33...♕c7 34.♜xh5+-) 34.♜xe5 ♘f5 (34...g6 35.♕h6+-) 35.♞xh5 ♘d7 36.♜e2 ♘f6 37.♞h3+- and next on the agenda is g4.

32.cxb4 axb4 33.a4!

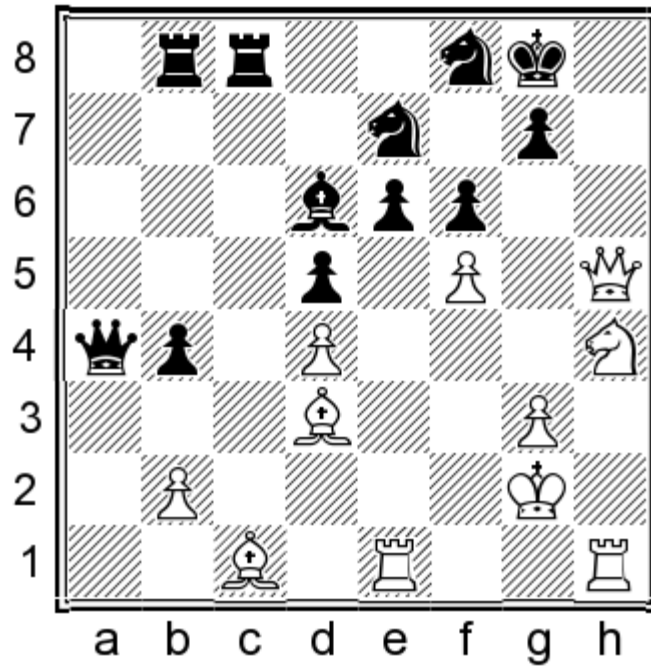


A pawn is not important. White keeps the b-file closed. Also, the queen will be out of play.

33...♜xa4 34.♘h4

One more piece helps in the attack.

34...gxh5 35.♜xh5 ♜ec8 36.f5!+-



Opening the e-file and closing the escape route for Black's king.

36... ♖b3 37.fxe6 ♗xe6

White's threat was ♖h8!-♗g6-♖h8 with mating. 37... ♖xd3? 38. ♖f7+ ♔h8 39. ♗g6#

38. ♖h7+ ♔f7 39. ♖h5+

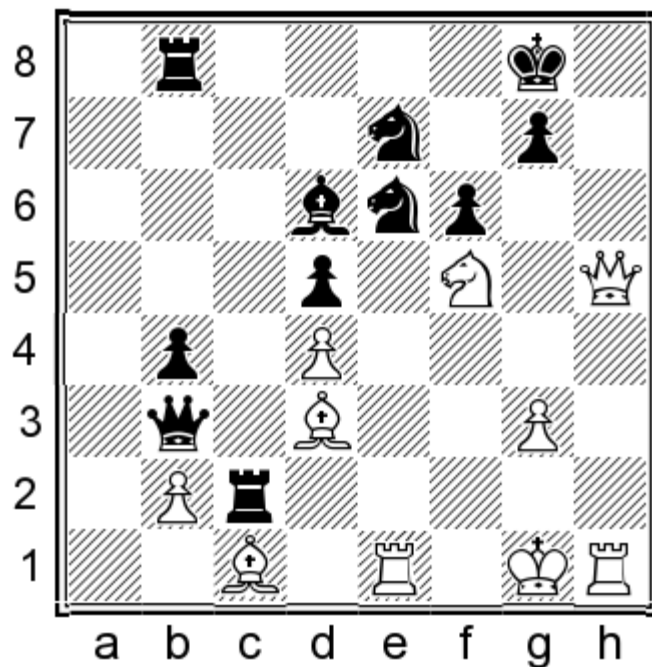
Again White repeats because the 40th move is not far off, after which comes some new time for thinking.

39... ♔f8

Now Black didn't want to repeat, but anyway his position would be lost. If Black repeats the position after 39... ♔g8, then comes 40. ♗f5! ♖c2+

(40... ♖xd3 41. ♖h8+ ♔f7 42. ♗xd6+ ♔g6 43. ♖h7#)

41. ♔g1!



(41. ♕xc2?? ♖xc2+ 42. ♜e2 ♗xf5 43. ♗xf5 ♘xf5 44. ♜xe6 ♙f7 45. ♜e1 ♘xg3+)

41... ♘xf5 42. ♖h7+ ♙f7 43. ♗xf5 ♘f8 44. ♜h8+- and Black doesn't have any defense against ♖h5.

**40. ♘g6+ ♙e8**

Thanks to the open e-file, the black king can't run far. 40... ♘xg6 41. ♖xg6+-

**41. ♜xe6 ♙d7 42. ♜xe7+! ♕xe7 43. ♖f5+**

Conclusion: Bearing in mind the healthy pawn structure of Black, White must play energetically! One of the ways is to take advantage of the two bishops! When you achieve the advantage of two bishops by taking (♘xg6) the plan is an attack on the Black king with g3-♙g2-h4-♜h1-h5!

**1-0**

**P. Piscopo (2405) — B. Maciejka (2601)**

ITA-chT 41st Senigallia (4), 01.05.2009

In this next game, compared with the previous, Black played the accurate 10... ♕h5! before castling. At some point he started to play 'lukewarm' moves, which White exploited by transferring his rook into attack via the 3rd rank. Black comes under heavy fire and only time-trouble or his ELO saves the day. White gave a perpetual in a winning position!

**1.e4**

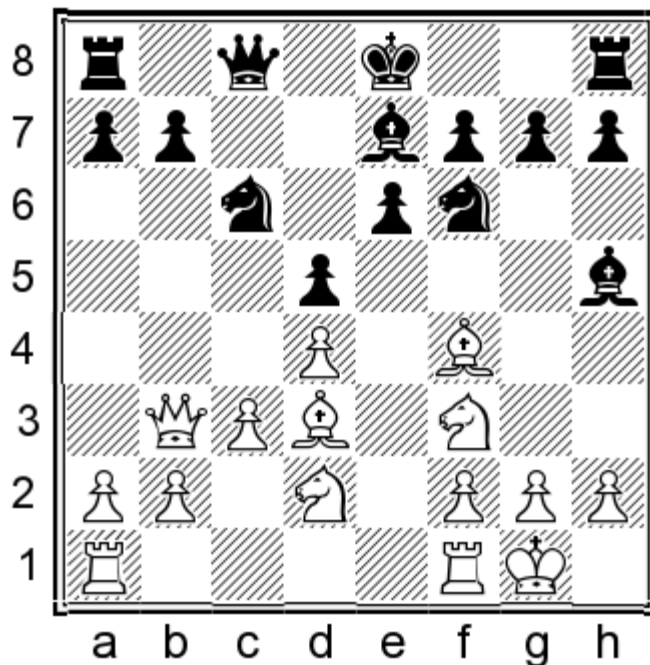
Again pay attention to our move order! 1.d4 d5 2. ♕f4 c5 3.e3 cxd4 4.exd4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘f6 6. ♘d2 ♕g4 7. ♖b3 ♖c8 8. ♘gf3 e6 9. ♕d3 ♕e7 10.0-0!

**1.e4 c6**

Is this book about the Caro-Kann? Please, be patient.

2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♔d3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘f6 6.♙f4 ♙g4 7.♚b3 ♚c8 8.♘d2 e6 9.♘gf3 ♙e7 10.0-0 ♙h5!

The right move. After an exchange of light-squared bishops, it is much harder for White to organize a kingside attack.



11.♙ae1

Don't forget which rook comes to e1!

11...♘d7?!

Prophylactic, but very passive. Black didn't want to allow ♘e5, but it was not a real threat. A better place for the knight is f6, from where he can harass White's ♙f4. Logical is 11...♙g6 12.♙xg6 hxg6 13.♘e5 0-0?! Too early, after which one not so well-known player reacted well and won a game with a typical attack on the kingside!

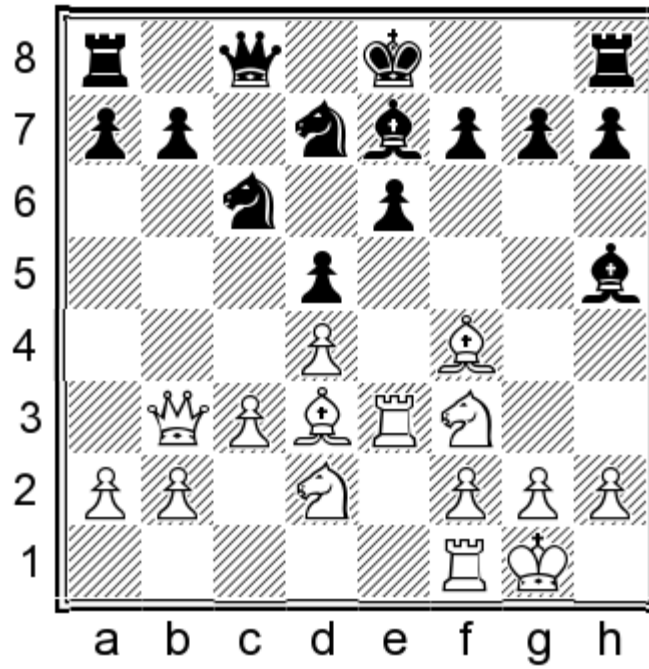
(Black should wait with castling and correct was 13...♘h5! 14.♙e3 ♚c7∞)

14.♘df3 ♘d7 15.♙e3! The rook is aiming for the h3 square! 15...a6 16.♙fe1 ♘cxe5 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♙xe5 b5 19.♚d1! a5 20.h4! A typical pawn sacrifice with the idea of opening the h-file! 20...♙xh4 21.♚g4 ♙e7 22.♙h3 ♙a6 23.♙ee3 ♚e8 24.♙eg3 the threat is ♚h5 with a mating attack! 24...f6 25.♚h4! ♔f7 26.♚h7 ♙g8 27.♙xg6! ♔f8

(27...fxe5 28.♙f3+ ♙f6 29.dxe5+-)

28.♙hg3 ♚f7 29.♙f4 ♙d6 30.♙xg7! ♙xg7 31.♙xg7 ♚xg7 32.♙h6 ♚xh6 33.♚xh6+ ♔e8 34.♚xf6 ♔d7 35.g4 ♙a8 36.g5 ♙e7 37.♚h6 ♙g8 38.f4 b4 39.♚h7 bxc3 40.bxc3 1-0 Fischer,E-Assmann,T (2346) Bayern 1999. A nice game by White which highlights the importance of learning the opening by understanding the ideas.

12.♙e3!



A nice move with the idea of doubling rooks on the e-file and transferring to the g3 or h3 squares at some point.

**12...a6 13.a4**

Of course! Why give any possibilities for a minority attack after ...b5?

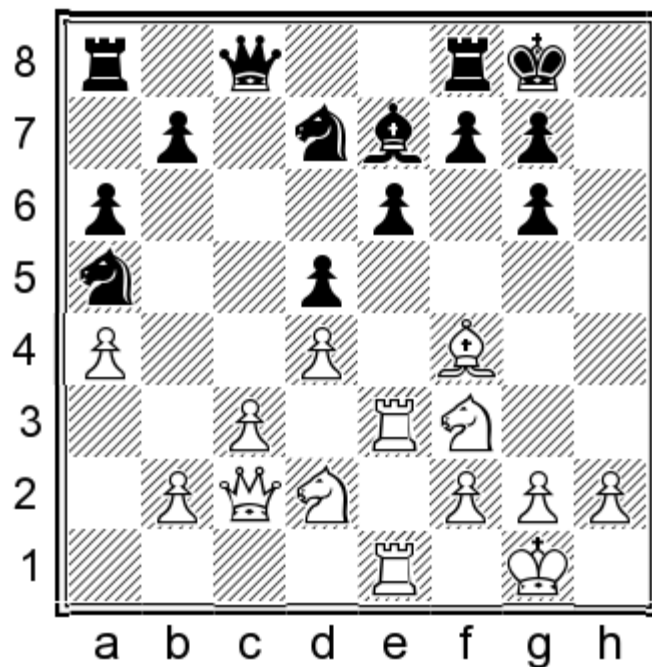
**13...♙g6**

Better late than never! 13...0-0?! is risky because of 14.♘g5 and the rook comes to h3 after 14...♙g6 15.♙xg6 hxg6 16.♖h3.

**14.♙xg6 hxg6 15.♖fe1 ♘a5?!**

Giving White a tempo: the queen had no function on b3. Best for Black was to admit his mistake and play 15...♘f6 when his position would be passive but tough.

**16.♙c2 0-0?!**



Too risky. Black's king would be much safer after 16...♔f8!?

#### 17.h4

A good idea but not the best move. With 17.♘g5! and a quick transfer of the rook to h3, the attack moves more quickly.

17...♗c4 18.♗xc4 ♕xc4 19.♖d1!

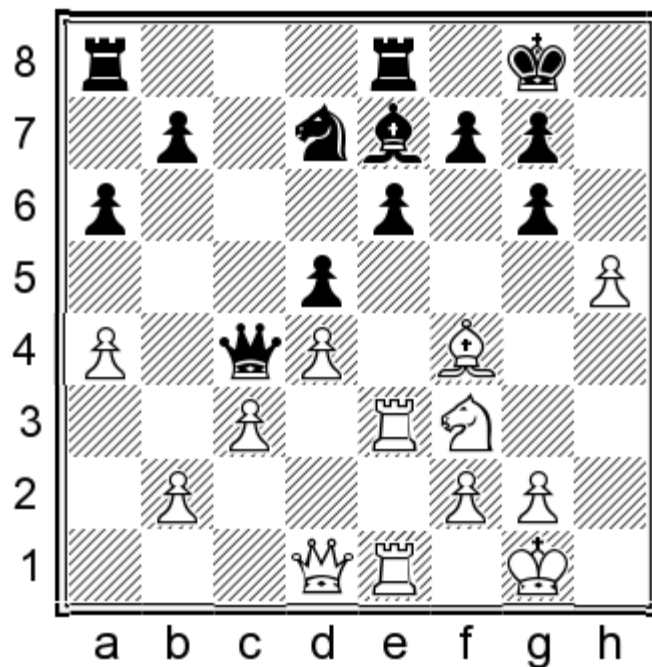
A tricky move connected with the idea h5!

#### 19...♜fe8?

Black didn't feel the danger and consequently overlooked White's threat. More resilient was 19...♗f6 20.♗e5 ♕c8 21.♗g5 ♕d8 22.♜h3± and h5 comes.

#### 20.h5!

Now the attack progresses easily! The rook from e3 realises his function!

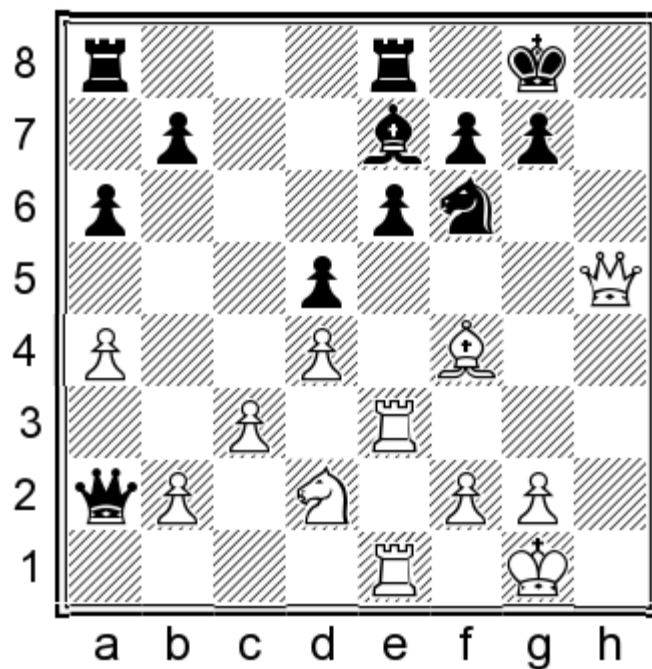


20...gxh5 21.♘d2+-

And now the h-file comes into White's hands!

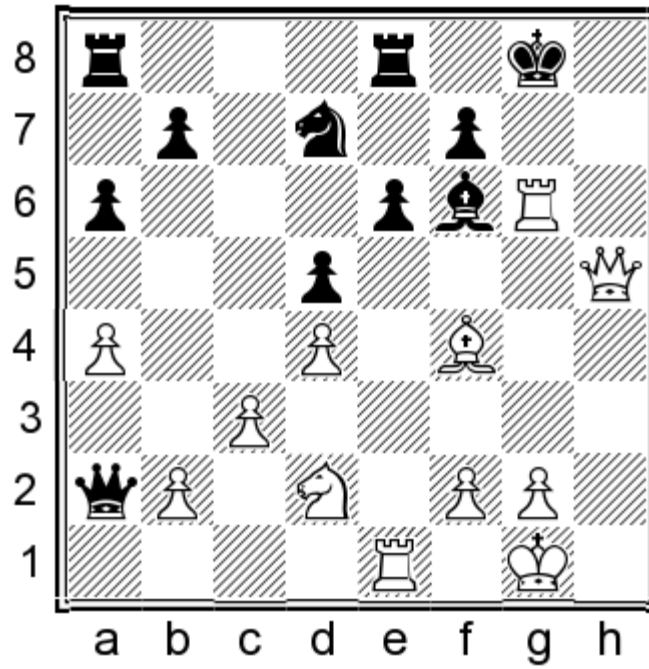
21...♙a2 22.♙xh5 g6

A nice win comes after 22...♘f6



23.♙h1! the best place for Queen. Here she does not bother the rook (coming to h3). 23...g6 24.♙h3 ♔g7 25.♙h6+ ♔g8 26.♙f8! ♘h5 (26...♔xf8 27.♙h8+ ♔g7 28.♙h6#) 27.♙xe7 ♖xe7 28.g4 ♙xb2 29.♘f3+-

23.♙g3 ♙f6 24.♙xg6+!



White has a decisive attack. This kind of sacrifice must work in view of the misplaced queen on a2!

**24...fxg6 25.♖xg6+ ♔g7**

Other moves leads to a quick loss! For example:

25...♔f8 26.♗d6+ ♗e7 (26...♝e7 27.♝xe6+–) 27.♝xe6 ♗xd6 28.♞f5+ ♔g8 29.♝g6+ ♔h8 30.♞h5#;

25...♔h8 26.♝e3 ♗g7 27.♞f7! ♘f6 28.♝h3+ ♘h7 29.♗e5 ♝g8 30.♞g6+–

**26.♝xe6 ♝xe6**

Black is forced to play this. If he tries moving the rook then ♝e7 comes.

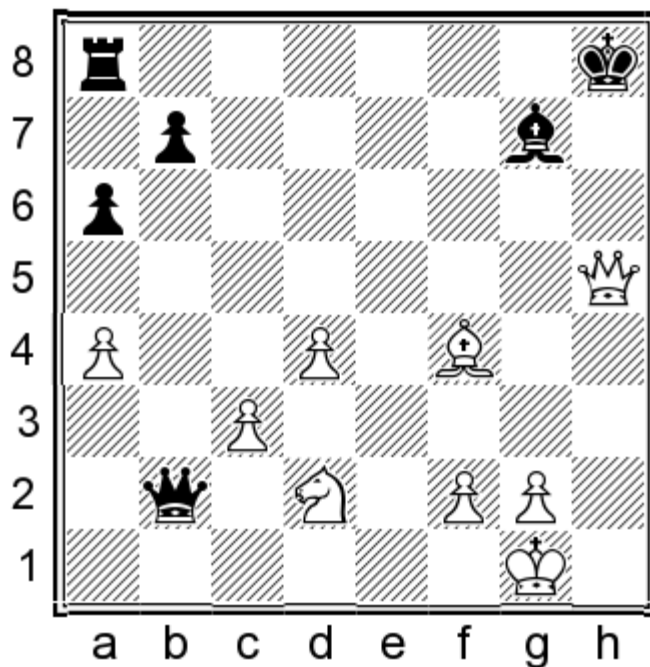
**27.♞xe6+**

Three pawns for the exchange and still with a bad Black king is more than enough for the win!

**27...♔h8 28.♞h3+**

An important check placing the Black king in the firing line of future checks!

**28...♔g8 29.♞xd7 ♞xb2 30.♞xd5+ ♔h8 31.♞h5+ ♔g8 32.♞d5+ ♔h8 33.♞h5+**



Time-trouble or respect for a higher-rated opponent? An easy win was 33. ♖e4! ♜f8 34.g3 ♚a1+ 35.♙g2 ♚xa4 36.♙d6 ♜c8 37.♚h5+ ♙g8 38.♚g6 ♚c6 39.♚e6+ ♙h8 40.d5 ♚c4 41.♙g5+- and mate is here after ♚h3

**33...♙g8 34.♚d5+**

Conclusion: How to use the e-file properly? The half-open e-file requires bringing the rook from a1 to e1! The other one aims for the h-file after the further plan h4-h5! Never forget idea ♜e3, entering the rook into the attack via the 3rd rank! With doubled g-pawns, Black's king is not so safe — short castling is always a questionable decision for him.

**1-0**

**V. Kramnik (2796) — S. Sjugirov (2646)**

Qatar Masters Doha QAT (8.2), 28.12.2015

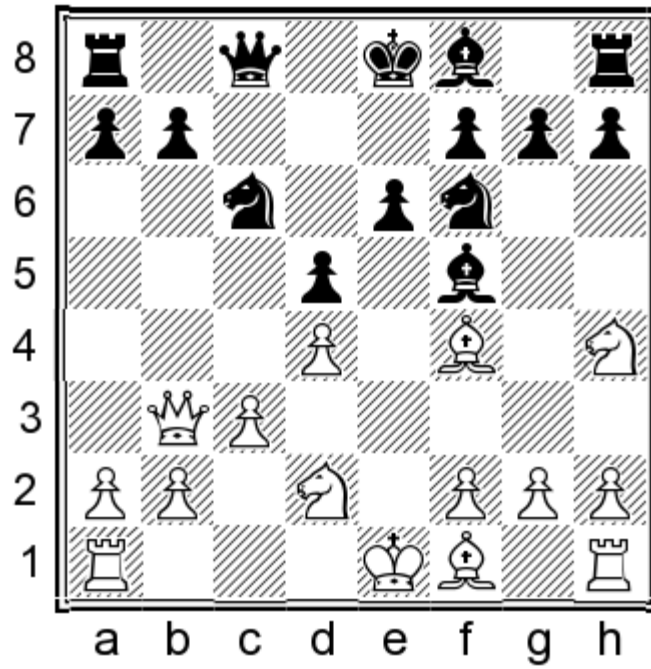
In this game Sanan Sjugirov developed his bishop on f5 after which Kramnik reacted with 9. ♖h4 with the idea to grab the advantage of the bishop pair! Black reacted with 10...♙g6, immediately renouncing the bishop. After that Kramnik chose a new plan with long castling entering into a very concrete and complex position from which he emerged as the winner! Only for one moment did Black have a chance thanks to White's inaccurate move order — which still doesn't change the general evaluation of this nice and very complex game.

**1. ♖f3**

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 is our preferred move order. 2...c5 3.e3 cxd4 4.exd4 ♖c6 5.c3 ♖f6 6.♖d2 ♙f5 most popular at the top level lately 7.♚b3 ♚c8 8.♖gf3 e6

**1. ♖f3 d5 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♙f4 c5 4.e3 ♖c6 5.♖bd2 cxd4 6.exd4 ♙f5 7.c3 e6 8.♚b3 ♚c8 9.♖h4!**

Without this move, White can only dream of an advantage.



By taking the bishop, White wins more squares for his pieces, especially for the White bishop which takes up its best spot on d3.

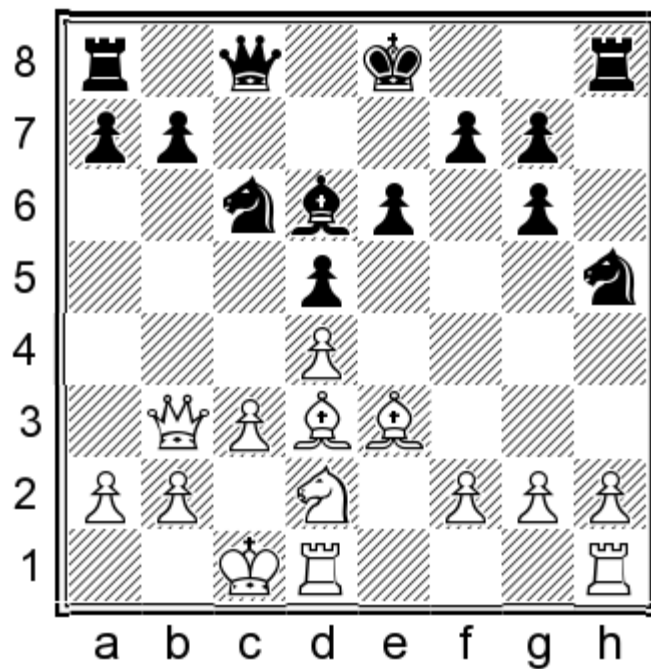
**9...♗g6**

Giving up the bishop pair without any great justification! In the next games in this chapter you can see 9...♗e4.

**10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♗d3 ♖h5**

Securing a post for the bishop at d6.

**12.♗e3 ♗d6 13.0-0-0!?**



A completely new idea — Vladimir Kramnik decides to make the game sharper! Usually White plays 13.g3 with short castling and the preparation of a kingside attack in mind. As Black's plan includes the minority attack, it seems that White's king is safer on g1. My opinion is that White has a minimal advantage even in that case, but Kramnik goes his own way. 13...♘f6 14.♚d1 0-0 15.f4± Kamsky,G (2741)-Macieja,B (2614) Achaea 2012.

### 13...a6?!

A limp move that places Black in problems. The correct approach is 13...0-0 with quick counterplay by way of ...♞b8 and ...b5. There is no need for ...a6 in a minority attack, unless White already has played a4. 14.♙b1 ♞b8 (Too optimistic is 14...b5 15.♚xb5 ♞b8 16.♚a6 ♚c7 17.♙a1 ♞b6 18.♚a4 ♞fb8 19.♞b1 and Black does not have enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 15.h4 b5 16.g4 ♘f4 17.♙f1! The bishop has too much value in this type of position. Black's knight looks strong, but that is only temporary. 17...a5 (17...b4 18.c4 ♘a5 19.♚c2 ♘xc4 20.♘xc4 dxc4 21.♙xc4±) 18.♞c1! Prophylaxis! White ensures a spot for the queen at d1. 18...a4 19.♚d1 ♘a5 20.h5 g5 21.♘f3 ♚d8.

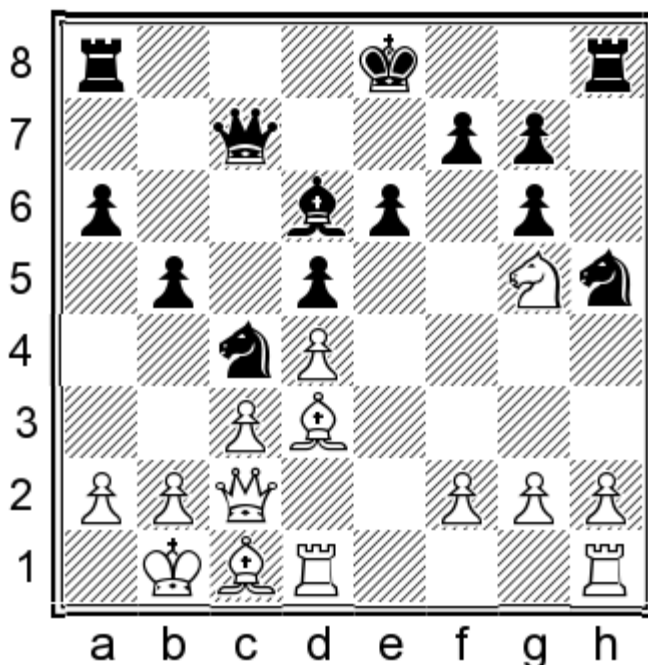
### 14.♙b1 b5

Black starts his counterplay but with some prophylactic moves it will soon be stopped!

### 15.♚c2 ♘a5 16.♘f3 ♘c4 17.♙c1

A nice place for the bishop, defending against a potential ...♙a3

### 17...♚c7 18.♘g5!



White's pieces are ideally posted and one can "smell sacrifices in the air". The knight on g5 is a real headache for Black as the game progresses.

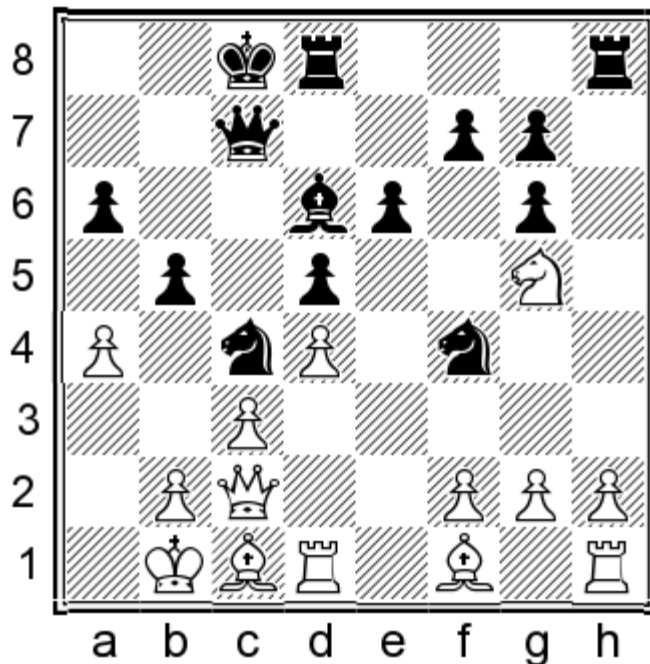
### 18...♘f4 19.♙f1

Like I said, it's important to preserve the bishop, while the knight will be expelled after g3.

### 19...0-0-0?!

A dubious move, but what else? There is no safe haven for the Black king, so probably the safest was to keep him in the center. If 19...0-0? 20.h4! and next comes h5.

### 20.a4!±



Moving the pressure to the queenside, but on first sight it looks risky for White also!

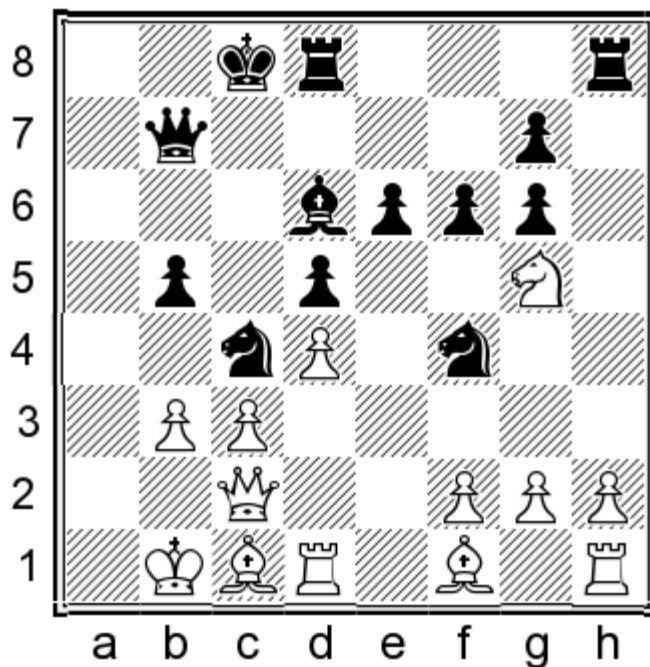
### 20...♖b7 21.axb5 axb5 22.b3?

With this inaccurate move order Black could have caused big problems to the White King. Better was 22.g3! with the same idea: 22...♗h5 23.b3 ♗a5 (and now the ideas with 23...♙c7 don't work 24.♗xf7 ♖a8 25.bxc4 bxc4+ 26.♙b2 ♖hb8 27.♗xd6 ♙xd6 28.♙h3+- Black cannot increase the pressure on the White king, while the Black king is also not safe after ♖he1 next.) 24.♗a2±

### 22...♗a5?

Black didn't take his chance! 22...♗a3+? 23.♙xa3 ♙xa3 24.g3 ♗h5 25.♗a2 ♙d6 26.♗a5 ♙c7 27.♗xb5±

The point was in this move! 22...f6!



A nice intermediate move with the idea after 23.♖f3 (or 23.bxc4 bxc4+ 24.♚b2 fxg5 25.♚xb7+ ♔xb7 26.g3 ♖h5 27.♙xg5 ♜a8 and the white king is also not safe in the endgame! 23.g3 fxg5 24.gxf4 ♔c7! 25.bxc4 bxc4+ 26.♙b2 ♜a8→) of playing 23...♔c7! and White has huge problems with his king! For example 24.bxc4 bxc4+ 25.♙b2 ♜a8! 26.g3 ♜hb8→

**23.♚a2!**

Now the Black minor pieces slowly go backwards!

**23...♖c6 24.g3 ♖h5 25.♙d3**

White has created a weakness in Black's position and he is playing against it. There is no need for the complications starting with 25.♙xb5 ♚xb5 26.♖xf7 ♔d7 27.♖xh8 ♜xh8→

**25...♔b8 26.♚e2 ♖a7**

An ugly, but necessary, move. 26...b4 is almost losing by force! 27.♙a6! ♚a7 28.♖xf7± with the idea 28...♚xf7 29.♚b5+ ♔a7 30.♚xc6 bxc3 31.♙d3 ♚b7 32.♚xb7+ ♔xb7 33.♜de1±

**27.♙d2**

White is in complete control. The only job left is to activate the rooks.

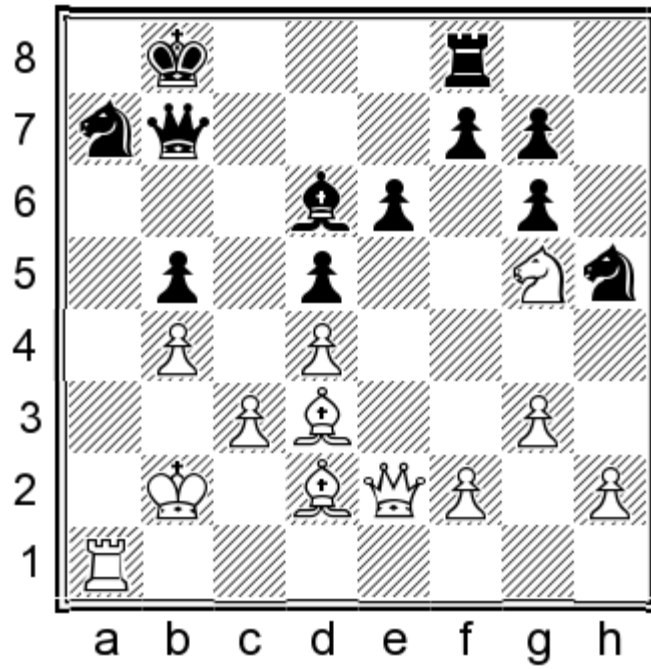
**27...♜c8 28.♔b2 ♜c6 29.♜a1 ♜f8**

Releasing the queen from defense of the f-pawn.

**30.♜a2 ♜a6**

Black needed to exchange one pair of rooks, otherwise resignation is not far off in view of his king's position!

**31.♜xa6 ♚xa6 32.♜a1 ♚b7 33.b4!**



Black's b-pawn is doomed. Black doesn't have a defence against the coming ♖a5.

**33...♗f6**

Preventing ♖a5 with 33...♙c7 is not possible because of 34.♗xf7! ♖xf7 35.♙xg6+–

**34.♖a5 ♙c7 35.♙f4!+–**

The b-pawn goes and with him the protection of Black's king.

**35...♙xf4 36.gxf4 ♖c7**

Black handed over a pawn so now he is going to take something for him.

**37.♙xb5 ♖xf4 38.♗f3**

Now the knight is coming to help!

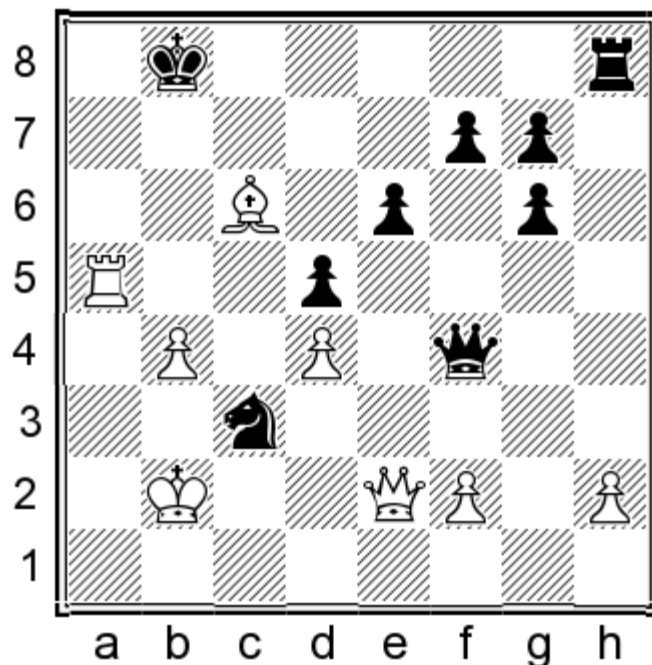
**38...♗e4**

In case of 38...♖e4 White would avoid exchanges and continue the attack with 39.♖d1 ♖c8 40.♗e5+– with ♖a1 next.

**39.♗e5 ♖h8 40.♗c6+–**

It was necessary to eliminate the defensive knight, otherwise Black's king is safe.

**40...♗xc6 41.♙xc6 ♗xc3!?**



The best practical chance, but not enough — especially against Kramnik. The black king cannot get far away after 41...♔c7 42.♖a7+ ♔d6 43.♙a4!+-

**42.♙xc3 ♖h3+ 43.♔c2 ♗xd4**

With a piece sacrifice, Black has activated the rest of his pieces and now White has to be a little bit careful! Kramnik chose the safest way, entering into the endgame!

**44.♗b5+ ♔c7 45.♗b7+ ♔d6 46.♗b8+**

The simplest and the best! Also winning was 46.♖xd5+ exd5 47.♗d7+ ♔e5 48.♗xh3 ♗xb4 49.♗g3+ ♔e6 50.♗e3+ ♔d6 51.♙e8 ♗c4+ 52.♔d1 ♗g4+ 53.♔d2 ♗b4+ 54.♔e2 ♗g4+ 55.♔f1 ♗f5 56.♔g2+- but White will still have to work hard for a win.

**46...♔e7□**

46...♙xc6? 47.♖a6+ ♔d7 48.♖d6+ ♔e7 49.♗d8#

**47.♗a7+!**

Excellent assessment! The b-pawn will be fast in the endgame!

**47...♗xa7 48.♖xa7+ ♔d6 49.♙a4 ♖h4**

Black is going to have to control the b-pawn somehow. In the case of 49...♖xh2 it is unstoppable! 50.♖d7+ ♔e5 51.b5 ♖xf2+ 52.♔b3 ♖f1 53.♔b4!+-

**50.♔b3 ♖h3+ 51.♔b2 ♖h4 52.♖d7+ ♔e5 53.♔a3**

In this elegant way checks are avoided and the pawn is undisturbed in his running.

**53...♔d4 54.♖xf7 ♖xh2 55.b5 ♔c5 56.♖c7+**

A lovely London game by an inspired former World Champion. Conclusion: With the advantage of the two bishops, long castling deserves serious attention because White has good attacking resources. White's king is safe on the queenside!

1-0

**F. Berkes — T. D. V. Nguyen**

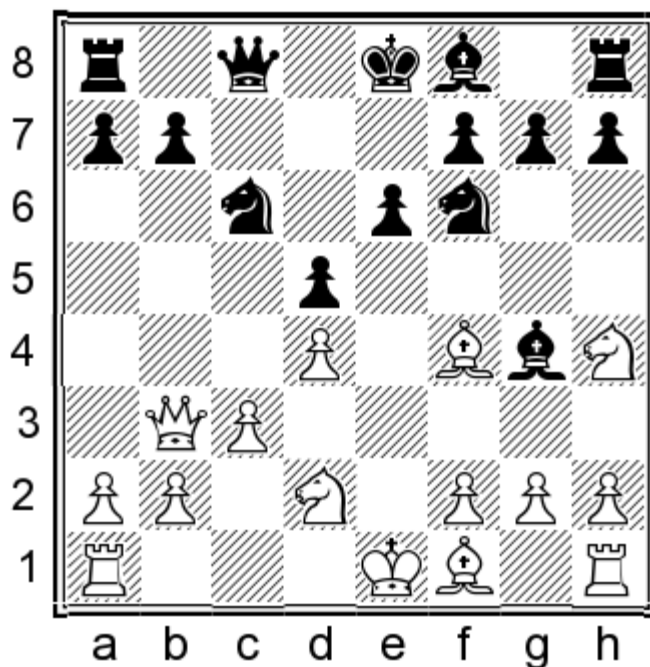
Zalakaros open, 28.05.2016

In this game, compared to the previous, Black chose after 9.♘h4 to react with 9...♙g4, avoiding giving up the bishop immediately! With this move Black forces White to play h3-g4 if he wants to have the bishop pair advantage. In pushing his pawns on the kingside, there appears a weak square in the white position — f4 — which Black tries to use! With precise moves White can cover the f4 square while avoiding the exchange of the dark-squared bishop (with ♙e3 after Black's ...♙d6) preserving the bishop pair. White's advanced pawns on the kingside will actually be very useful for further action with h4-h5!

1.d4 ♘f6

Our move order is 1...d5 2.♙f4 c5 3.e3 cxd4 4.exd4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘f6 6.♘d2 ♙f5 7.♗b3 ♗c8 8.♘gf3 e6 9.♘h4

2.♘f3 d5 3.♙f4 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 cxd4 6.exd4 ♙f5 7.c3 e6 8.♗b3 ♗c8 9.♘h4! ♙g4



This is also one of the possible reactions against the ♘h4 plan! Now if White wants the advantage of two bishops he must continue with the plan h3-g4 as in the game!

10.h3 ♙h5 11.g4 ♙g6 12.♘xg6 hxg6 13.♙e2±

The only logical move against ♘g4!

13...♙e7?!

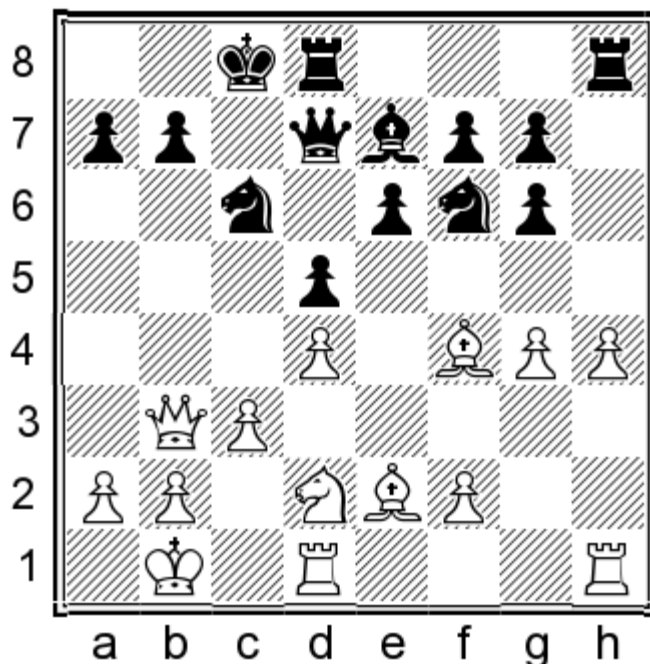
A passive move! Much better was 13...♗d7 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.h4 ♙d6 16.♙e3!± White has to keep the bishop,

otherwise the f4 square would be weak! The plan would be similar as in the game — to play h5 at some point pressuring the g7 pawn, or to prepare c4 after ♖b1-♕f3-♖c1!

**14.h4 ♖d7 15.0-0-0 0-0-0**

Long castling is the most logical option to secure both kings!

**16.♕b1?!**



Very logical, but an imprecise move which affords Black some tactical opportunities. Better was 16.♖dg1 ♕d6 17.♕e3!± with the idea of h5 and putting pressure on the g7 pawn!

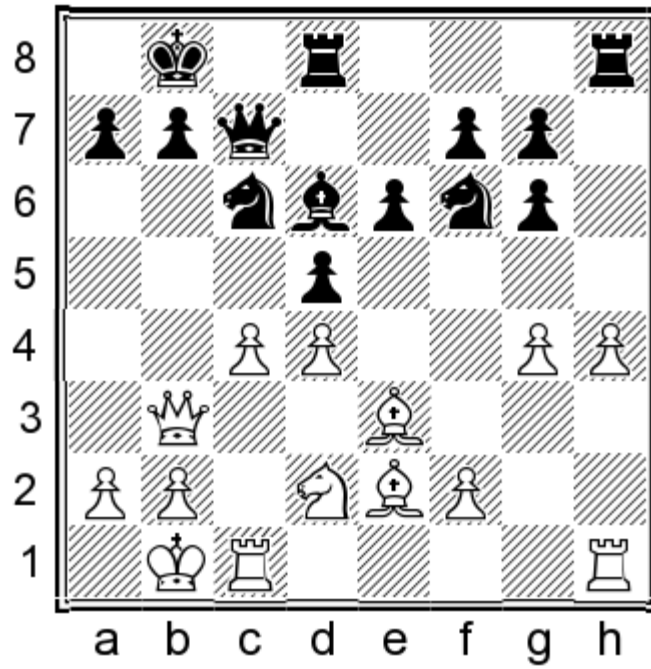
**16...♕d6?!**

Black missed his chance! Compared with 13...♖d7, here Black unnecessarily lost one tempo with ♕e7-♕d6! According to the computer, Black should play 16...e5! and now White needs to play some very precise and difficult moves to not stand worse! 17.♕g3! (17.dxe5?! ♖xg4 18.♕g3 ♖xf2! 19.♕xf2 ♖f5+ 20.♖c2 ♖xf2) 17...♖xg4 18.♕a1! with the idea of avoiding ...♖f5 checks 18...♕d6! Black must somehow kill the very dangerous bishop on g3! (Opening the c-file with 18...exd4? 19.cxd4 is very dangerous for the black king! Next will be ♖c1 with many threats; 18...e4 19.♖c1! idea is c4 and 19...♕d6? is not possible 20.♕xd6 ♖xd6 21.♕xg4+-) 19.♖xd5 ♖f6 20.♖c4 exd4 21.♖b3 ♕xg3 22.fxg3 ♖d5 23.♖xd4 ♖xc4 24.♕xc4 ♖xd4 25.♖xd4 ♖xd4 26.cxd4=

**17.♕e3!**

Taking on d6 with the weakened f4 square would be a huge positional mistake!

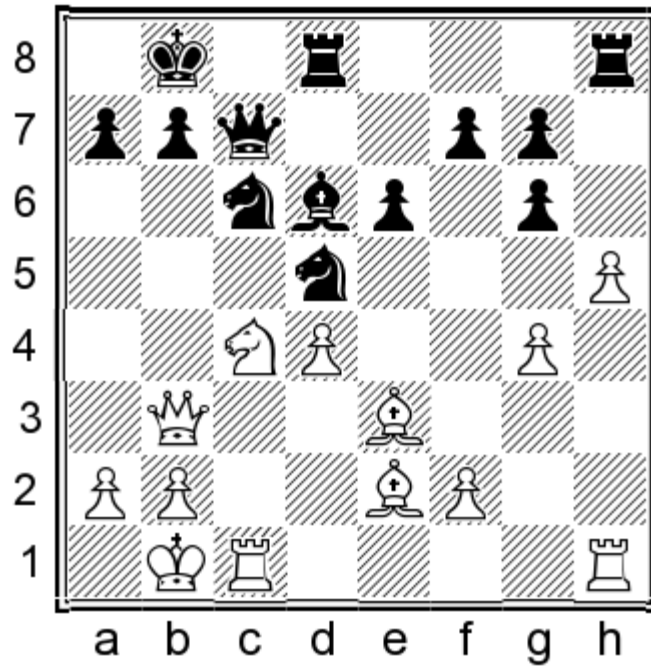
**17...♖c7 18.♖c1 ♕b8 19.c4!**



White pieces are optimally placed and it's a good moment for opening the c-file — and it's a position for the white bishops!

19...dxc4 20.♖xc4 ♗d5 21.h5!

Another excellent move with idea of pressuring the g7 pawn and playing on both flanks!



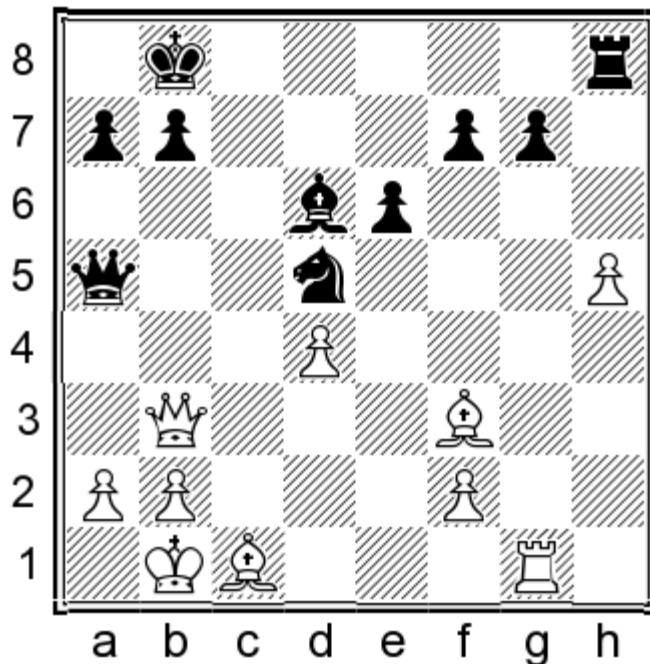
21...gxh5 22.gxh5 ♖a5?!

This move loses time! Logical was 22...♙f4! 23.♙f3 ♖a8±

23.♗xa5 ♜xa5 24.♞hg1 ♝c8?!

Once more a limp move! Black should play 24...♗xe3 25.fxe3 ♕f5+ 26.♖c2 ♖c8 27.♖f1 ♕xc2+ 28.♗xc2 ♖xc2 29.♕xc2 f6 30.♖g1 ♖h7 hoping to draw this very unpleasant endgame!

**25.♗f3 ♖xc1+ 26.♗xc1±**



The pawn g7 became a big problem!

**26...♖c8**

Black decides to play for all or nothing! Passive defence with 26...♖h7 leads to a fast end after 27.h6! g6 (27...gxh6? 28.♖g8+ ♕c7 29.♗c2+-) 28.♖g5! and White wins the d-pawn!

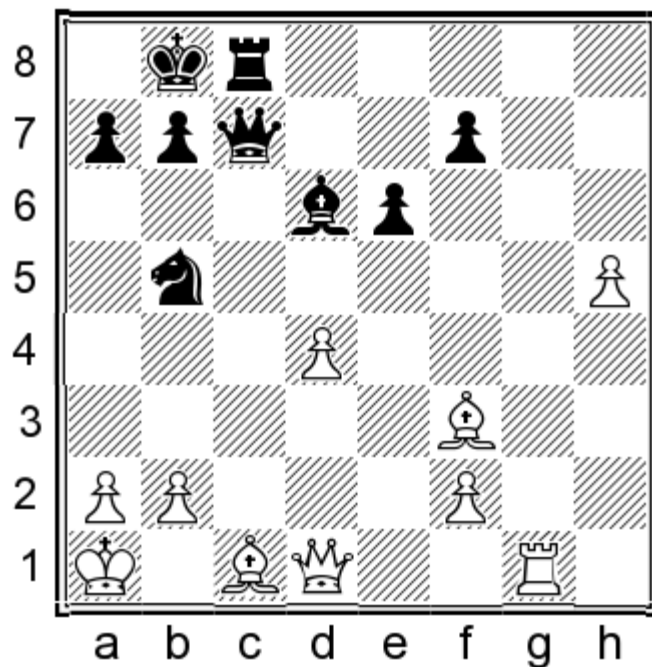
**27.♖xg7 ♗c3+!?**

Playing for a tactic is Black's only hope.

**28.♕a1**

The safest move for a human! Also winning was 28.bxc3 ♕f5+ 29.♕a1 ♕xf3 30.h6 ♖xc3 31.♗b1! ♖c8 32.h7 ♗b4 33.♗xb4 ♖xc1+ 34.♕b2 ♖c8 35.♗d2+- but this way is easy only for engines!

**28...♗b5 29.♖g1 ♕c7! 30.♗d1!**



The best technical move! White now has to consolidate his pieces and take care of the 1st rank after which the h-pawn will be decisive! 30.♙e3? ♜xd4! and 1st rank is weak!

**30...♜xd4 31.♙e4**

Now the c2 square is covered!

**31...♙e5 32.h6 f5 33.♙d3 ♚a5**

Black is tricky! The threat is ...♞c1 with ...♜b3!

**34.♚b1 ♚c7 35.♙e3**

Disturbing the knight with the idea of ♚a4!

**35...♚d7 36.♙f1**

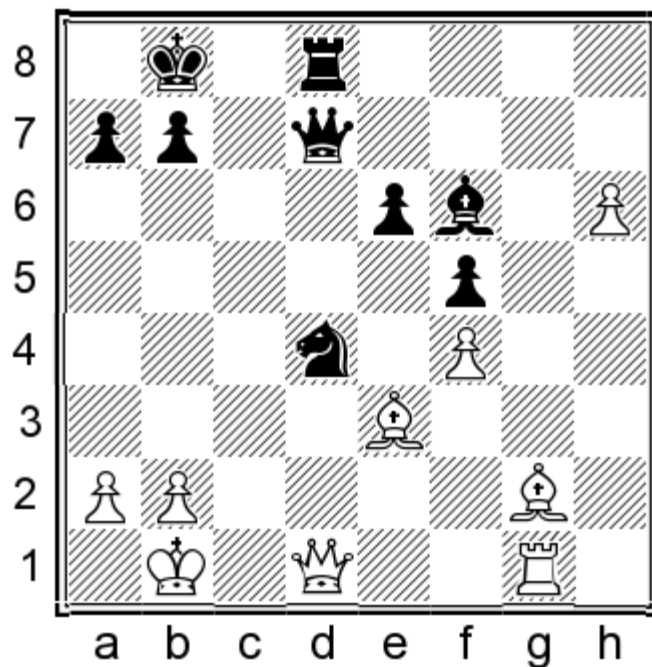
Now Black queen is on the pin!

**36...♞d8**

Heading for a position with opposite colour bishops wouldn't be a good idea. 36...f4 37.♙xd4 ♙xd4 38.a3! White must make some air for the King! 38...♚h7+ 39.♚d3 ♚xd3+ 40.♙xd3 ♙xf2 41.♞g7 ♙d4 42.♞f7 ♙e5 43.h7± and to hold this position for Black looks like mission impossible! Next move is ♙e4! And after 43...♞c7 White will always have 44.♞xf4! ♞c1+ 45.♚a2±

**37.f4 ♙f6 38.♙g2?**

Searching for the best diagonal for the bishop, White forgets about Black's counterplay! The most accurate move was 38.♞g2! bringing the rook on d2 and the game would be finished quickly!



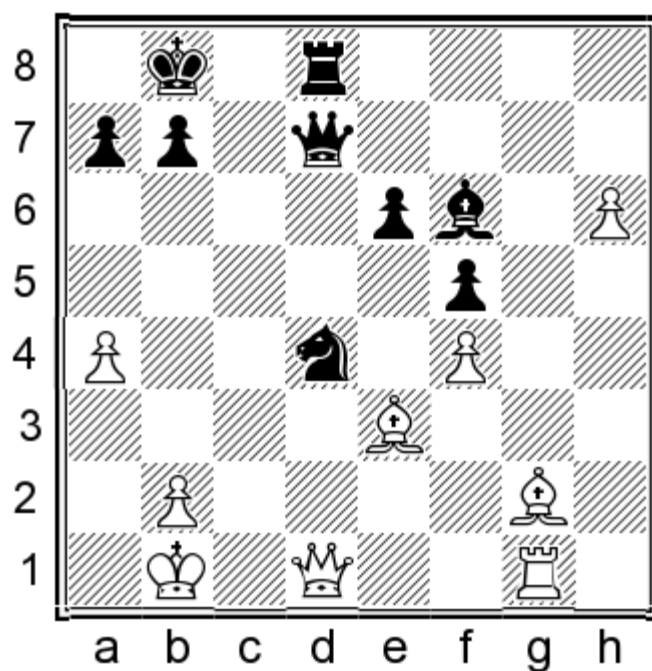
38... ♖b5!⇒

The position is now no longer so clear! Black is very active!

39.a4

39. ♖h1 leads to a draw after 39... ♗e2 40. ♖b3 ♗c3+! 41. ♔a1 ♘ (41. bxc3 ♖d3+ 42. ♔b2 ♖e2+ ♡) 41... ♖xb3 42. axb3 ♗d1 43. ♗c1 ♗f2= and now the h-pawn has no support from bishops!

39... ♖d7?±



I guess in time-trouble, Black makes a mistake! After the logical 39... ♖b4! Black could draw but after 40. h7 Black

probably missed 40...♖f3! 41.♞xd8+ ♕xd8 42.h8=♞ ♞e4+ 43.♔a2 ♞xa4+ 44.♔b1 ♞e4±

#### 40.♞h1 e5?

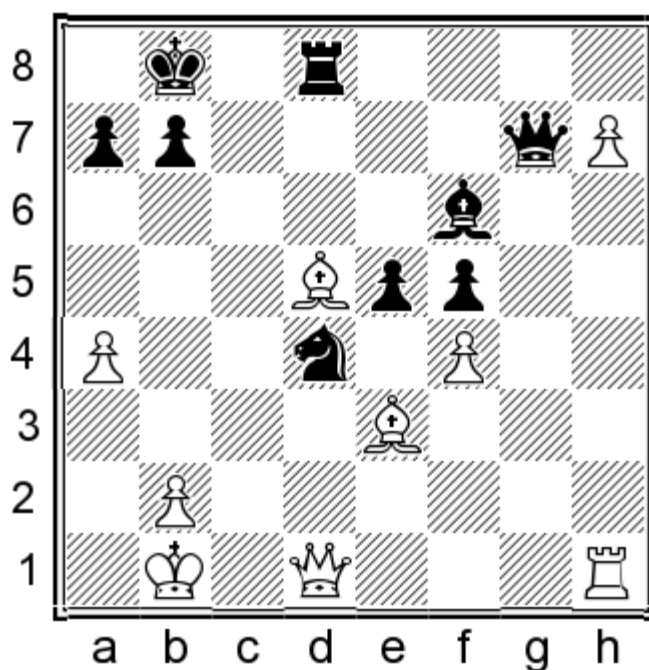
Closing the diagonal, Black lacks any chances to survive! 40...♕h8 still keeps the game alive 41.♕f2 ♞e8±

#### 41.h7+- ♞g7

After 41...e4 White has a forced win 42.♕xd4 ♞xd4 (42...♕xd4 43.h8=♞ ♕xh8 44.♞xd7 ♞xd7 45.♞xh8+ ♔c7 46.♔c2+-) 43.♞xd4 ♕xd4 44.♞d1 ♞h8 45.♞xd4 ♞xh7 46.♞d2 ♞h4 47.♞f2 e3 48.♞e2 ♞xf4 49.♞xe3 ♞xa4 50.♞e8+ ♔c7 51.♞e7+ ♔d6 52.♞xb7+-

#### 42.♕d5!

A nice move closing the d-file and the connection between rook and knight.

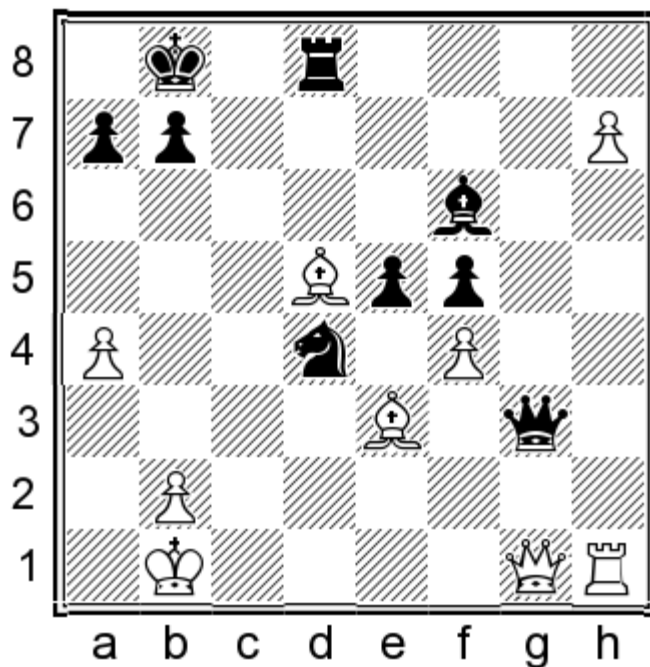


#### 42...♞g3

After 42...♞xd5 comes 43.fxe5! Important accuracy! White needs to open the diagonal h2-b8 to have a later ♕f4! (43.h8=♞+ ♞xh8 44.♞xh8+ ♕xh8 and the win is not so clear for White.) 43...♕xe5 44.h8=♞+ ♞xh8 45.♞xh8+ ♕xh8 46.♕f4+ ♔a8 47.♕c7! taking away the d8 square for a rook, the 8th rank is weak for Black! 47...♕f6 48.♞h1 ♞d7 (48...♞c5 49.♞h6+-) 49.♞h5+-

#### 43.♞g1!

This move kills off all Black's hopes! By exchanging queens, the promotion of the h7 pawn is much simpler!



43... ♖xg1+ 44. ♖xg1 ♜xd5 45. fxe5! ♜xe5

The main point comes after 45... ♜xe5 46. ♗f4!+- and next is h8=♖

46. ♗xd4 ♜e7 47. ♗xf6 ♜xh7

The rest of the game was Black hoping for a miracle!

48. ♖g5 ♜h1+ 49. ♔c2 ♜f1 50. ♖g7 a5 51. ♗d8 ♜f2+ 52. ♔b3 ♜f3+ 53. ♔a2

Conclusion: The Black plan with 9... ♗g4 — provoking pawn action with h3-g4 — actually helps White. With a space advantage, White has more options than Black and the possibility of playing on both flanks.

1-0

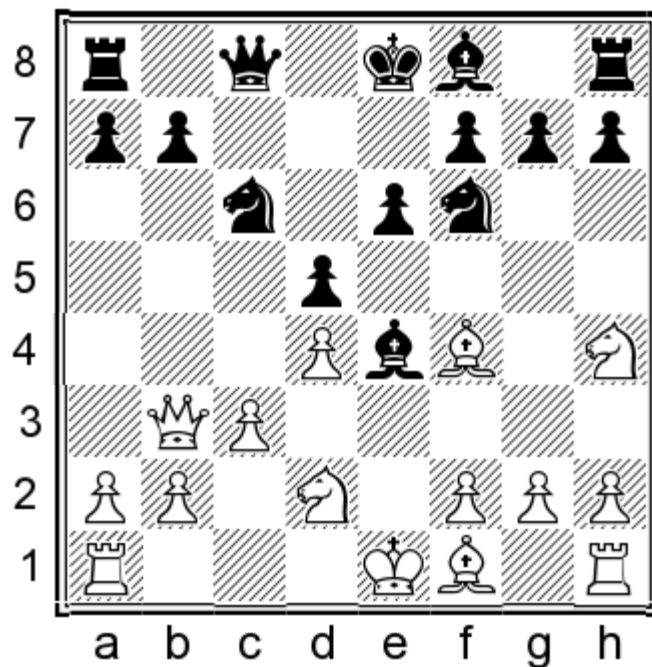
**M. Carlsen (2850) — R. Wojtaszek (2748)**

20th European Teams Reykjavik ISL (9.6), 22.11.2015

World Champion Magnus Carlsen is well-known for his universal style and endgame technique. In the opening phase of the game his main strength lies in versatility and avoiding the home preparation of opponents. In the game versus Wojtaszek, a highly-renowned theoretician and Anand's second, the London System comes as a logical choice! Compared with the game Berkes F.-Nguyen T, here Wojtaszek reacted with 9... ♗e4 instead of 9... ♗g6, which is a better way to give up the bishop in that the White knight remains on h4. On the 14th move Wojtaszek chose a new plan with long castling and entered a position with heterogeneous castling. Carlsen was on top and he found the brilliant idea of transferring his knight to c5 utilising many prophylactic moves to prevent Black's ideas.

1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♗f4 d5 3. e3 c5 4. c3 ♗c6 5. ♗d2 cxd4 6. exd4 ♗f5 7. ♖b3 ♖c8 8. ♗gf3 e6 9. ♗h4! ♗e4

Surely the best and the most critical move here.



**10. ♖xe4 ♗xe4**

10...dxe4!? is covered in next game.

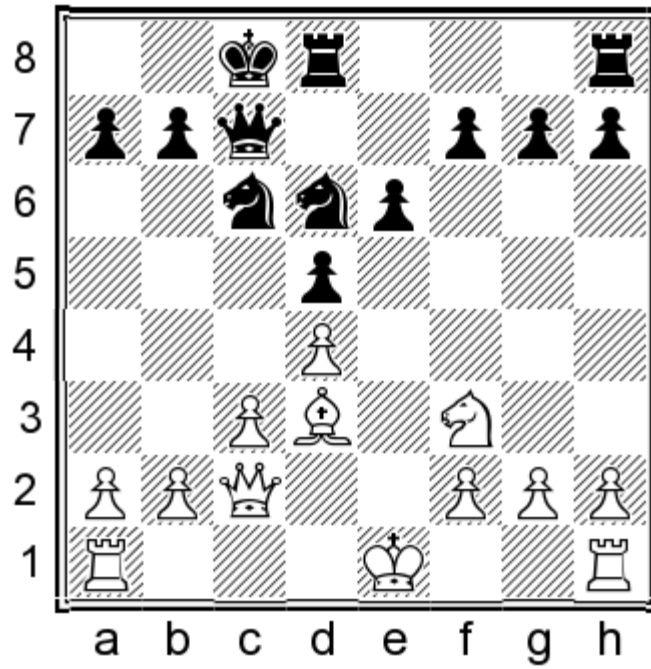
**11. ♗f3**

Carlsen decides to exchange bishops after Black's next move. Serious attention must also be given to 11. ♕d3!? ♕d6 (11...g5 12. ♕xe4 gxf4 13. ♕d3 ♖c7 14. ♗f3 0-0-0 15. 0-0-0±) 12. ♕e3!? with the idea of keeping the bishop pair 12...♗f6?! (The main question on this move is 12...f5!? when 13. 0-0 ♖c7 14. g3 0-0 15. ♗g2 looks slightly better for White. The idea is ♖ae1-f3 and playing on the e6-pawn.) 13. g3 0-0 14. 0-0 ♖c7 15. ♕g5! Disturbing the knight and provoking a kingside weakening. 15...♗d7 16. ♖c2 h6 17. ♕e3 ♖fc8 18. ♖e2 ♕e7 19. ♕f4 ♖d8 20. ♗f3 ♗a5 21. ♖ad1 a6 22. h4 ♗c4 23. b3 ♗a5 24. c4 ♗f6 25. c5 ♗c6 26. a3 ♗d7 27. b4± Jovanic, O (2469)-Doric, N (2308) Sibenik 2015. White had a big advantage and won this game in the end. A very convincing game by Jovanic Ognjen!

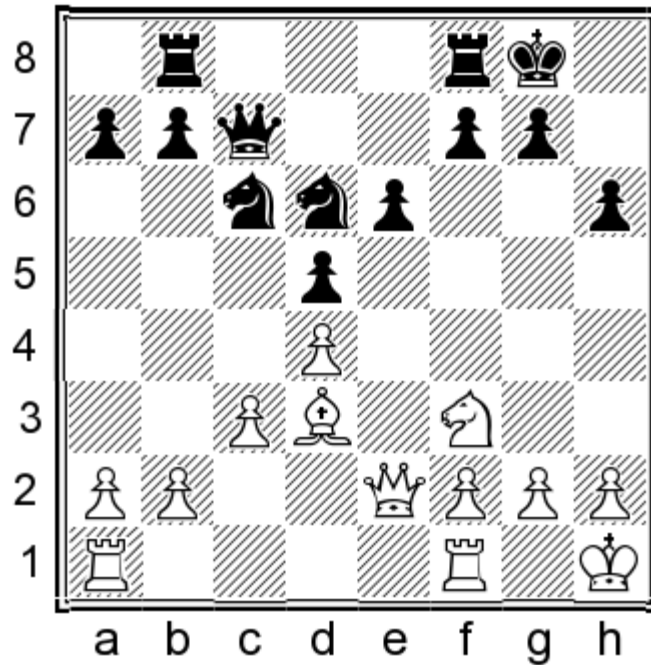
**11... ♕d6 12. ♕xd6 ♗xd6 13. ♕d3 ♖c7**

Improving the queen and waiting with castling.

**14. ♖c2 0-0-0**



A new plan in this position. I prefer White as it seems to me that White's attack is more real than Black's counter-chances on the other side of the board. Well known is 14...h6 15.0-0 0-0 with good results for Black in contemporary praxis. The reason why Wojtaszek avoided this may be 16.♖e2 ♜ab8 17.♔h1!N



A nice move with the idea (17.a4 ♜be8 18.♔e5 ♔xe5 1/2-1/2 (18) Sedlak,N (2538)—Prohaszka,P (2573) Hungary 2012) 17...b5 18.g4! White has chances for an attack considering the weakness at h6. Black doesn't have any pieces close to his King to defend him and the attack is real.

**15.0-0 h6 16.a4 ♔b8 17.♖fe1**

The beginning of the correct plan. The main purpose of the rook on e1 is to avert Black's freeing ...e6-e5.

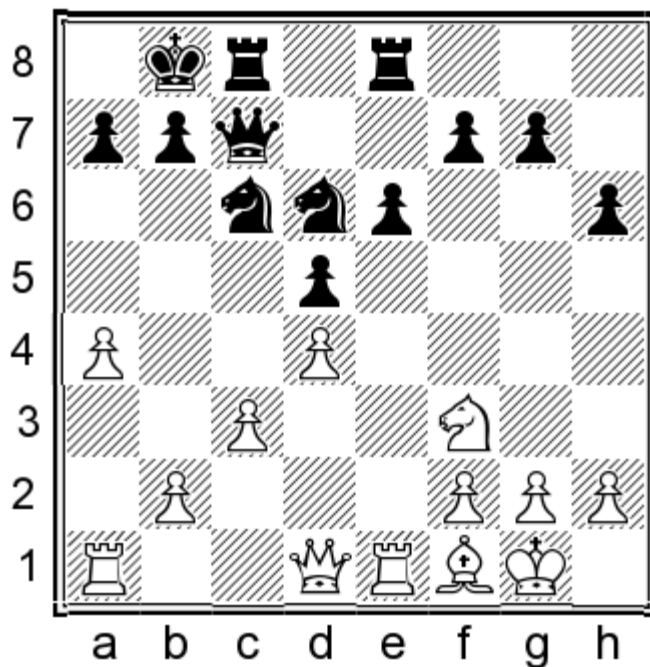
**17...♞c8 18.♞d1**

The threat was ...♖b4.

### 18...♖he8

Black gives up any ideas of an attack on White's king. His new plan is centralization and the ...e5 push. After 18...g5 19.♘d2 h5 20.b4 g4 21.♘b3 ♖cg8 22.a5 ♗e7 avoiding b5-b6 with tempo 23.♘c5 h4 24.b5 White's attack seems more dangerous.

### 19.♗f1!



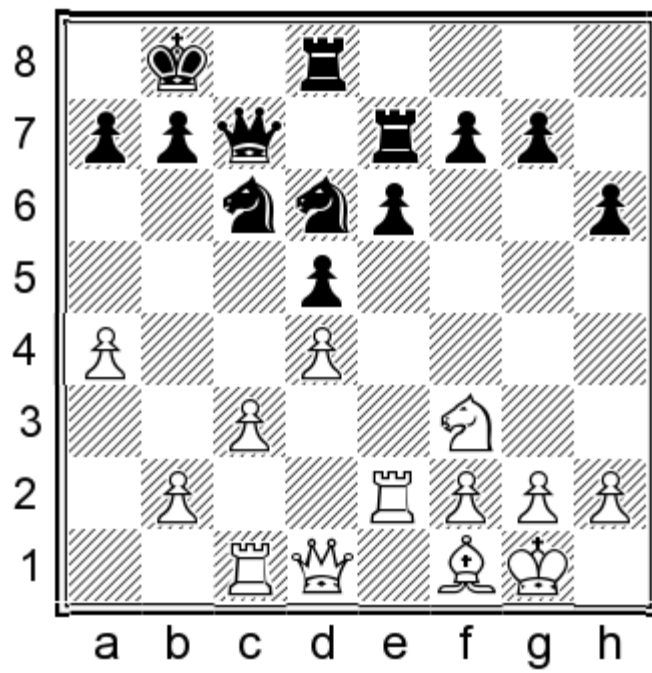
Very deep. Making a post on d3 for the knight which will go via the d3-c5 route and join the attack. Another idea is to make the move e5 difficult for Black to achieve, because d5 will hang.

### 19...♗e7 20.♖c1 ♗d8

Black goes for ...e5 and the rook will defend the d5 pawn in that case.

### 21.♗e2!

Another excellent move, leaving the e1 square empty for a knight and at the same time creating the option of ♖c2 supporting a c4 break.



21...♖e4 22.b4 ♗g5

Well, ...e5 at any cost.

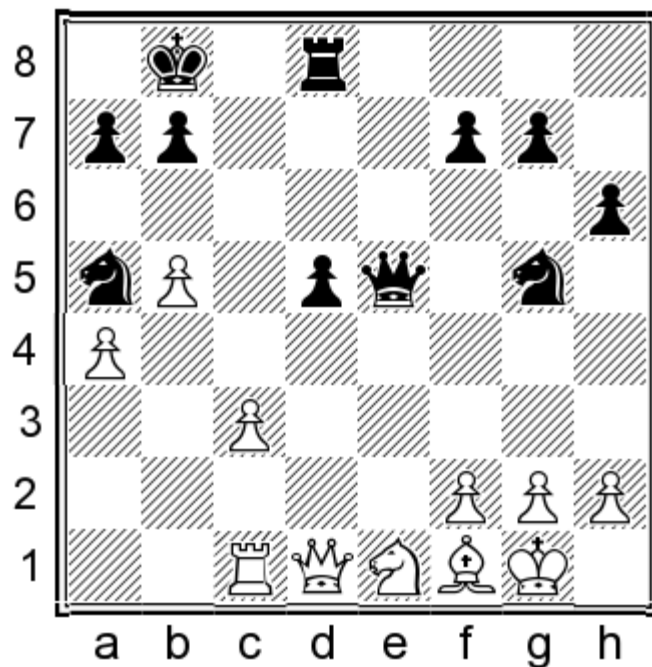
23.♗e1! e5

It seems Black is ok, but White has judged the chances better: the opening of the position is in his favor.

24.b5

An important zwischenzug, removing Black's knight from the center.

24...♗a5 25.♖xe5 ♖xe5 26.dxe5 ♗xe5?



The first serious mistake. After this, no chances against Carlsen! A very good option for Black was 26...♖c4! 27.♔xc4 (27.f4 ♜e4) 27...♜xc4 28.♜f3 ♜e6 with some compensation.

### 27.c4!±

The main point. It is possible that Black forgot his rook on d8 is unprotected.

### 27...♜e6 28.♜f3 ♜f4

The main idea is to prevent c5!

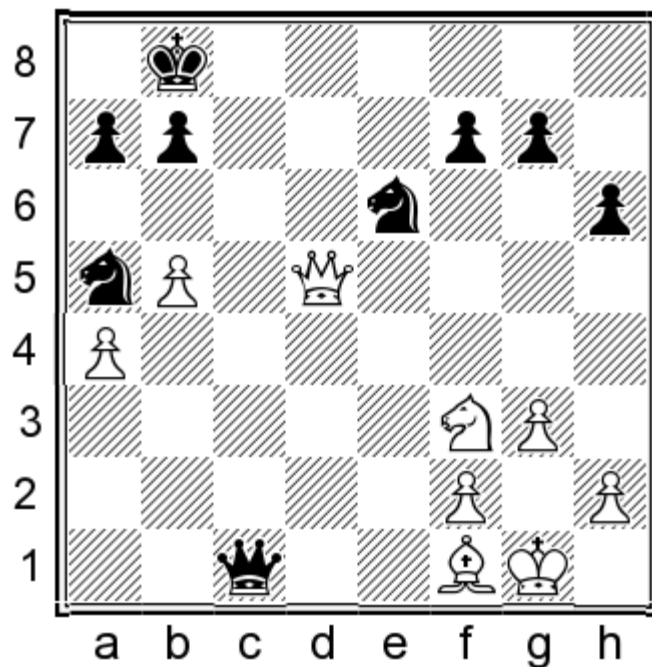
28...♜e4 29.c5±

28...♜d6 29.cxd5 ♜xd5 30.♜e1 b6 31.♞c3! with ♞d3! Next when the black king become very weak and the knight on a5 is far from events.

### 29.cxd5

Here there was a little trick. 29.c5? ♜b3!±

### 29...♞xd5 30.♜xd5 ♜xc1 31.g3!+-



The end of any counterplay for Black. Giving air to the king and covering the f4 square!

**31...♔c5 32.♔d7**

With the queen entering the 7th rank attacking the pawns on kingside, Black is forced into complete passivity.

**32...♔f8**

32...♔c7 33.♔e8+ ♖d8 34.♔f8!+-

**33.♖e5 ♖c5 34.♔d5!**

Again the strongest! Threatening ♔c5.

**34...♔c7**

34...f6? 35.♔xc5!+-

**35.♖xf7 ♖xa4 36.♔e5+ ♔b6 37.♖d6 ♖c5 38.♖e8!**

There is no defence against ♔c7 or ♔d6. A brilliant game by Magnus!

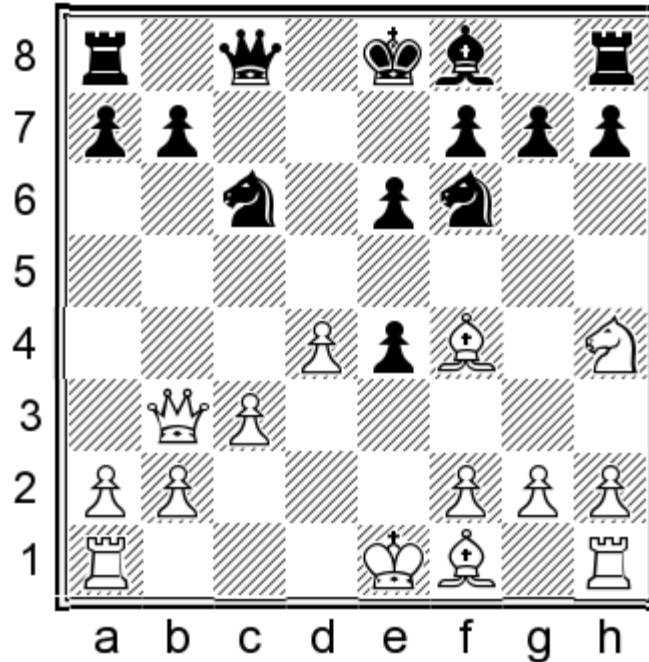
**1-0**

### Lessons to be learned:

1. In positions with heterogeneous castling, White's attack is more dangerous.
2. It's necessary to prevent Black's ...e5 move!
3. Re-inforce the attack by bringing the knight to c5 via e1-d3-c5

In this game, compared with the previous, my opponent chose a very interesting plan in 10...dxe4!? changing the structure, with the idea of playing against the ♖h4. I was ready for it because the whole idea with ♖h4 depends on that position. The critical moment in the game was 14...f5? which looks really attractive but is too optimistic because it creates weaknesses. After the opening of the e-file Black's plan fell apart.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♗d2 cxd4 6.exd4 ♙f5 7.♗gf3 e6 8.♚b3 ♚c8 9.♖h4 ♙e4 10.♗xe4 dxe4!?



Here is the difference between this and the previous game. My opponent expected the London and played very quickly, and this is an interesting move aimed at the dislocated knight at h4.

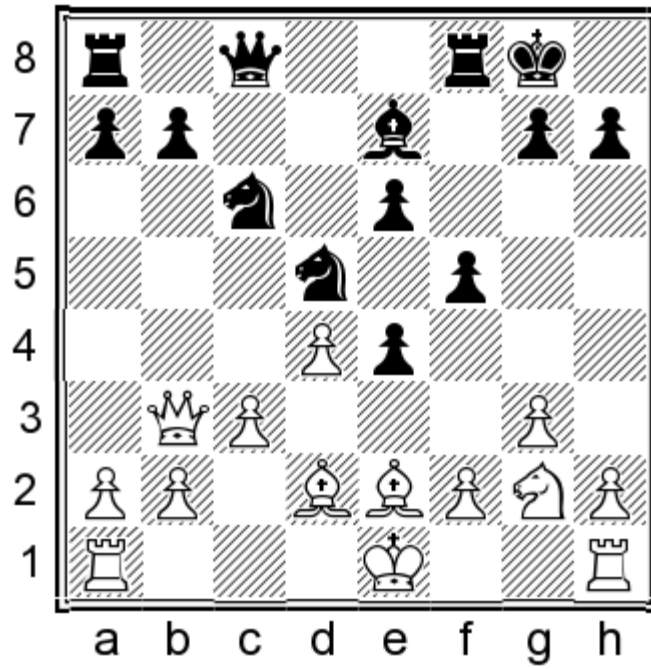
11.g3

Making a place for the unstable knight!

11...♙e7 12.♗g2

The only way to counter ...♗d5.

12...♗d5 13.♙d2 0-0 14.♙e2 f5?



Too ambitious. The main defect is the pawn on e6, especially after f3. The right reaction was 14...♖d7 15.0-0 ♜ac8 (15...e5 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.fxe3 ♜ad8 18.♜f2 and the f-file combined with the bishops guarantees a minimal advantage to White.) 16.♜ae1 ♜fd8 17.f3 exf3 18.♙xf3 ♗a5 19.♞c2 ♗c4 20.♙c1 b5 21.♞f2 ♙f8 22.♗f4± and even though Black's position is very solid I believed more in the bishop pair and open e and f files. My optimistic evaluation of this position can be seen in the following line, for example: 22...♗xf4 (22...b4 23.♗xd5 exd5 24.cxb4 ♙xb4 25.♜e2±) 23.♙xf4 b4 24.♙g5 f6 (24...♜e8 25.b3 ♗d6 26.c4±) 25.♙g4 ♜e8 26.♙xf6! gxf6 27.♞xf6±;

14...♜d8 15.0-0 ♞d7 16.f3 ♗f6 17.fxe4 ♗xe4 18.♙e3 ♙g5 19.♙xg5 ♗xg5 20.♜ad1 ♗e4 21.♗f4 ♗f6 22.♙f3 ♞c7 23.♙g2 ♜d7 24.♗d3± Sedlak, N (2556)-Ragger, M (2670) Achaea 2012.

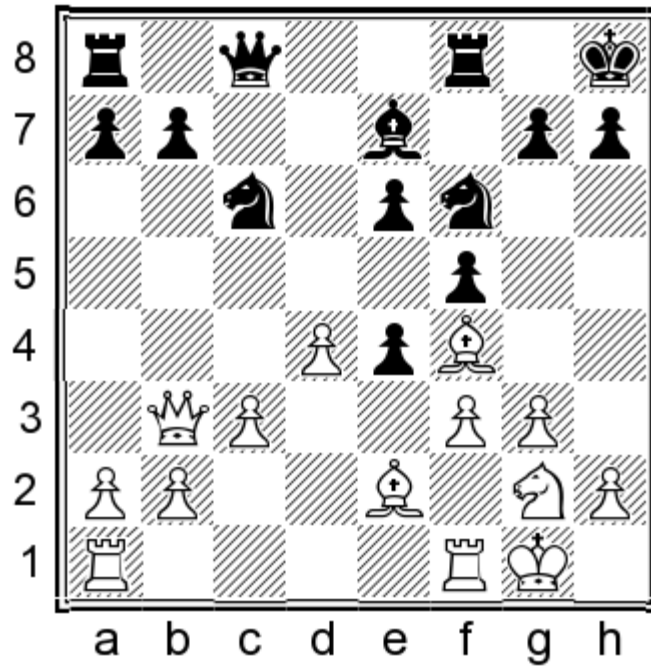
### 15.0-0 ♗h8 16.f3!

After the opening of the e-file, the weakness on e6 is obvious! Now it's clear that Black's concept was wrong.

### 16...♗f6

If 16...exf3 17.♙xf3 ♞d7 18.♜ae1 with easy play for White. After doubling rooks on the e-file, sooner or later the pawn e6 will fall!

### 17.♙f4!



On first sight the f4 square looks like a place for a knight, but preventing ...e5 is a priority. The knight will go to e3!

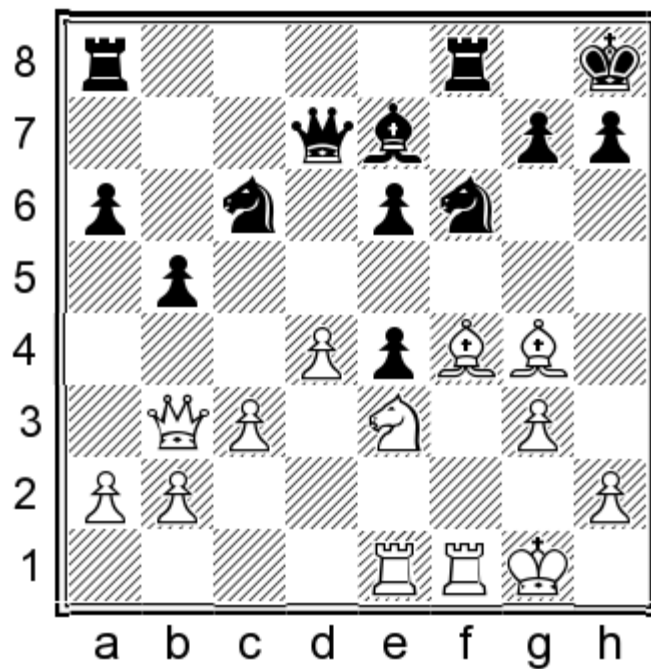
**17...a6 18.♖ae1 b5**

Black is trying to control White's central pawns and to ensure some strongholds for his knights!

**19.fxe4 fxe4**

Now it is only a matter of time before Black will lose one of the pawns. Also after 19...♗xe4 20.♕f3 White wins a pawn.

**20.♘e3 ♔d7 21.♗g4!**



Giving up the pair of bishops, but taking the e6 pawn.

21... ♖xg4 22. ♗xg4 ♕d5 23. ♖c2

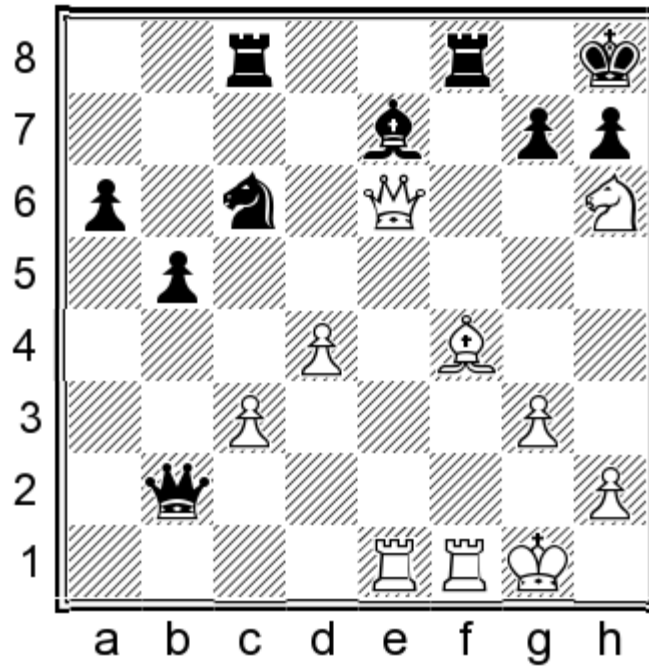
The pawn e4 is doomed, and with him also e6.

23... ♖xa2 24. ♖xe4 ♜ac8 25. ♖xe6+-

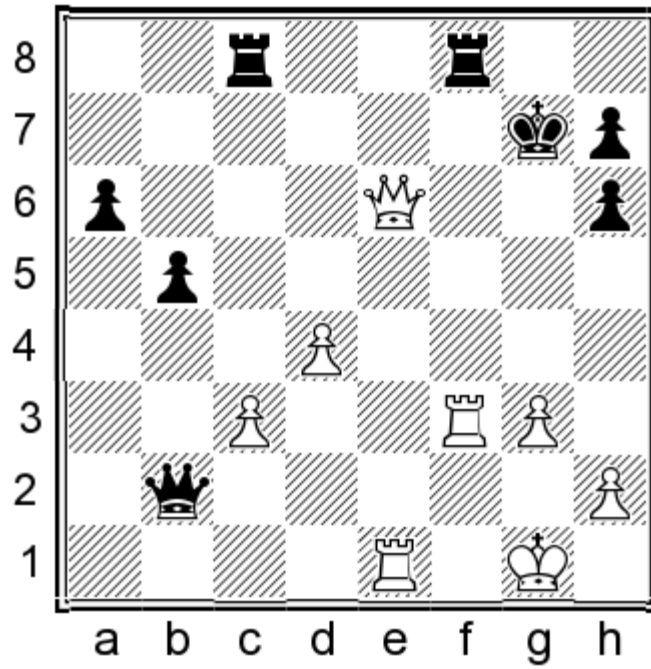
White's domination is obvious!

25... ♖xb2 26.d5

A pity. A nice win is 26. ♗h6!



26... gxf6 27. ♕e5+ ♗xe5 28. ♖xe5+ ♜g8 29. ♖e6+ ♜h8 30. ♖xe7 ♜g8 31. ♖e6+ ♜g7 32. ♜f3!!

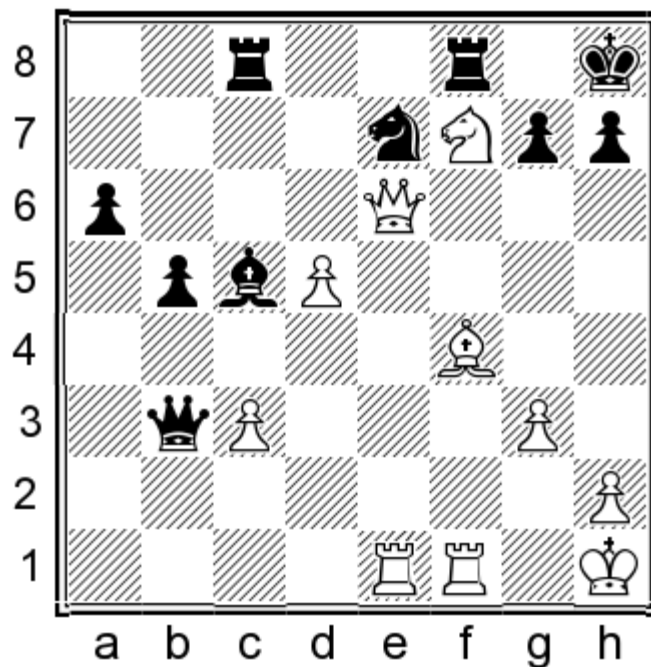


Wonderful! Black is helpless. This difficult move is what I missed in my calculations. The idea is simply to protect the c pawn with ♖ef1 next after which Black doesn't have a defense. Black is unable to play 32...♙xf3 because of 33.♚g4+! and White wins both rooks with checks.

26...♙c5+ 27.♖h1 ♗e7 28.♗e5?!

Unnecessary. I started to lose the thread of the game. Simple and good is 28.d6 ♗g6 29.d7 ♖cd8 30.♙c7+—

28...♚b3! 29.♗f7+?!



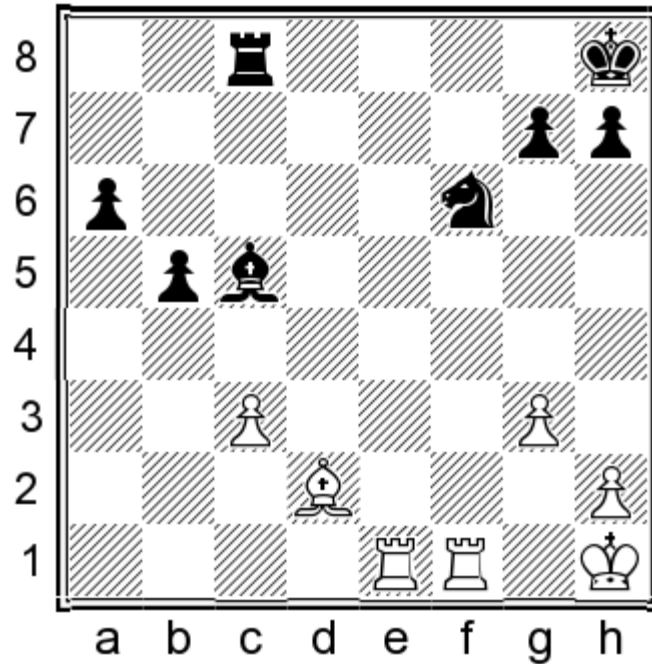
Time-trouble. I could win after 29.c4! closing the connection between Black's pieces 29...bxc4 30.♙g5 ♚b7 31.♙xe7 ♚xe7 32.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 33.♗g6+! hxg6 34.♚h3+ ♖g8 35.♖xe7 ♙xe7 36.♚e6+ ♖f7 37.d6+—

29...♖xf7 30.♗xf7 ♜xd5+ 31.♗xd5 ♘xd5±

It is not so simple anymore for White after two imprecise moves.

32.♞d2 ♘f6?

A weak move. Black takes his knight to the wrong side. Much better is 32...♔g8 and the knight should go to c4 via b6.



33.♞g5! ♖c6 34.♖d1

Finally the rook enters the 7th rank.

34...♔g8 35.♞xf6

The main defender is killed.

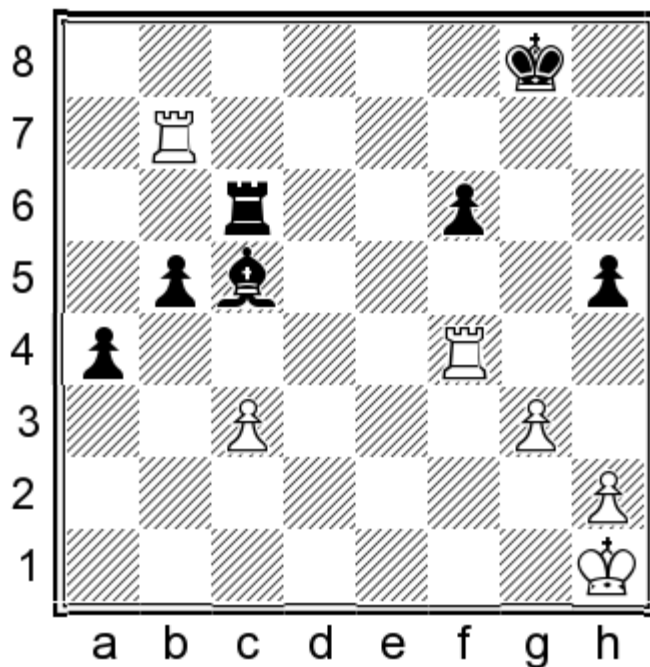
35...gxf6 36.♖d7+- a5 37.♖f4!

Another rook comes to help!

37...h5

Preventing ♖g4 with ♖gg7

38.♖b7 a4



The best practical chance. Black is lost immediately after 38...b4 39.♖c4 ♜b6 40.♖xb6 ♘xb6 41.cxb4 axb4 42.♖xb4 ♘c7 43.♖h4+–

**39.♖xb5 a3 40.♖a4**

The a-pawn is well controlled and now it's time to bring the king to the center.

**40...♔f7 41.♔g2 ♔g6 42.♔f3 ♘d6 43.c4 a2**

Otherwise, White's king comes to support the c-pawn on the square d5, with c5 next.

**44.♖ba5 ♘e5 45.♖xa2 ♖xc4 46.♖5a4 ♖c3+**

If 46...♖xa4 exchanging rooks, White wins with 47.♖xa4 ♔g5 48.♖a8 ♔g6 49.♔e4 h4 50.♖g8+ ♔h7 (or 50...♔f7 51.♖g4 hxg3 52.h4!+–) 51.♖g4 hxg3 52.hxg3 ♔h6 53.♔f5 ♔h7 54.♖g6 ♘d4 55.g4 ♘c3 56.♖xf6+–

**47.♔g2 ♖c6 48.♔h3!**

The best place for the king, avoiding potential checks and preventing any counterplay with h4. The winning plan now is just to penetrate with the rooks on the 8th rank combined with taking the h5 pawn. In this way the game is finished and the rest of the game doesn't need to be commented on.

**48...♖c5 49.♖a8 ♖c4 50.♖g8+ ♔h7 51.♖aa8 ♖b4 52.♖h8+ ♔g6 53.♖a7 ♖b2 54.♖ah7 ♘d4 55.♖h6+ ♔g7 56.♖xh5 ♘g1 57.♔g4 ♔g6 58.h4**

**1–0**

### Lessons to be learned:

1. Take a bishop pair at any cost; the knight can re-enter the game after g3-♔g2-♔e3
2. With f3, open the files for the rooks and direct pressure at the e6 pawn.

In this game between two great positional players, Black used the plan with ...g6. Like I said in the introduction to this chapter, Black's biggest problem is his dark-squared bishop on g7 and that is also shown in this game. Before you start to look at the game, take a look at the introduction to CHAPTER 1 where our move order is explained!

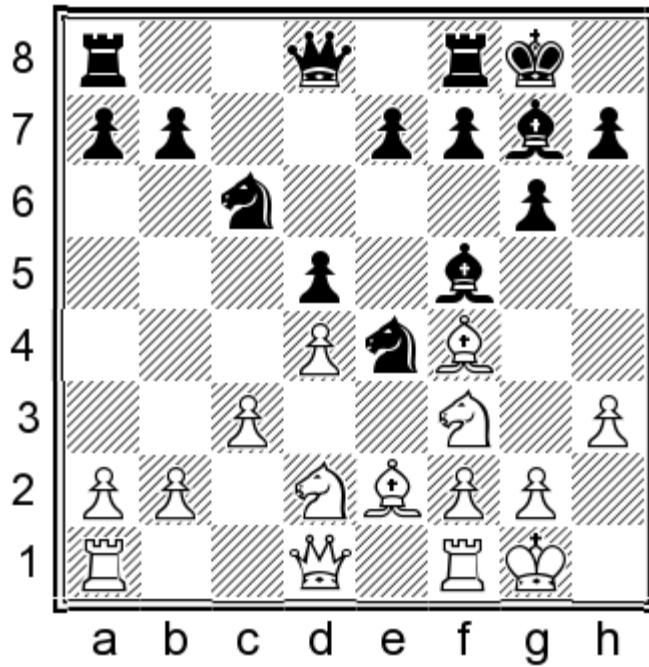
**1.d4 ♘f6**

Our move order is 1...d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e3 cxd4 4.exd4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘f6 6.♘d2 g6 7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.h3 0-0 9.♘gf3 ♗f5 10.0-0.

**2.♘f3 g6 3.♗f4 ♗g7 4.e3 c5 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.c3 ♘c6 9.h3 ♗f5 10.♘bd2**

Finally we come to our position via a different move order!

**10...♘e4**



A typical move for this kind of position. Black is seeking a better position for his knight, with the idea being to open his dark-square bishop, after which the freeing move ...e5 becomes more realistic.

**11.♗e1 h6**

Black's idea is ...g5, securing a safe home for the problematic bishop. However, this also weakens his king. The logical 11...♗b6 does not equalize after 12.♗b3 ♗xb3 13.axb3 ♘xd2 14.♘xd2 e5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗g4! ♗xg4 18.♗xe5 ♗e6 19.♘f3± when the knight dominates the bishop. Nikolenko,V (2221)-Safronov,S (2234) Cheliabinsk 2009.

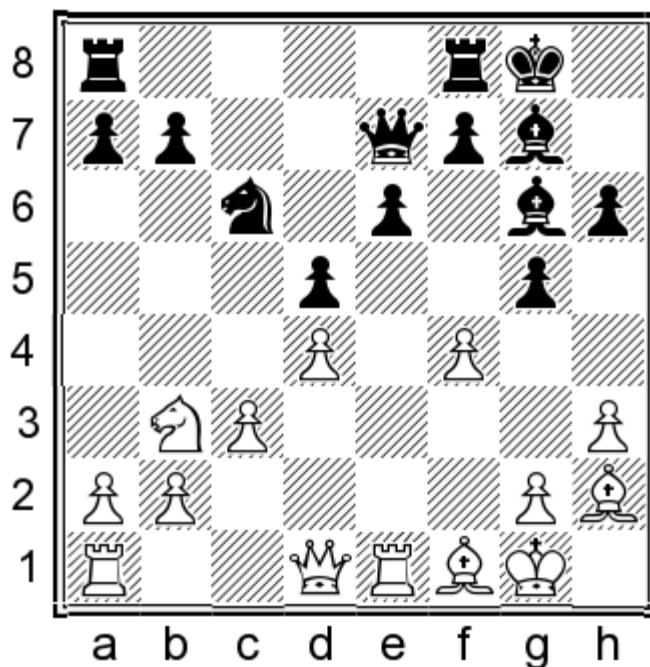
**12.♗f1 g5 13.♗h2 e6 14.♘xe4±**

White swaps knights with the idea of playing ♘d2 with tempo. After that White is able to play f4 in the future, at an opportune moment for him.

14...♙xe4 15.♘d2 ♙g6 16.♘b3

Improving the knight to the outpost on c5!

16...♚e7 17.f4?!



A good idea, but too early! Much better was first 17.♙d3! ♙xd3 18.♚xd3± with f4 next and Black lacks any counterplay.

17...♙e4!

It is quite possible that White missed this one. Black finds a nice place for the Bishop which can be supported with ...f5!

18.fxg5 hxg5 19.♘c5 ♙g6?!

A dubious move and Black is again in trouble. The most logical is 19...f5 with the active plan: ...♞ad8 and the ...e5 push.

20.♙h1

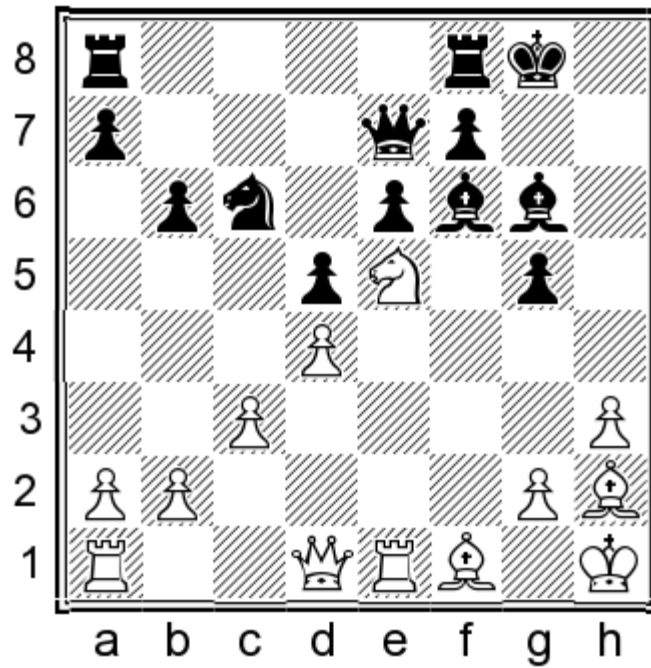
Avoiding the trap! 20.♙d3 is a mistake 20...♘xd4! 21.♙xg6 (21.cxd4 ♙xd4+ 22.♙h1 ♙xc5 23.♙xg6 fxg6+) 21...♚xc5 22.cxd4 ♚xd4+ 23.♚xd4 ♙xd4+ 24.♙h1 fxg6 25.♞xe6 ♙xb2 26.♞b1 ♞f6 and White is fighting for a draw in this endgame!

20...b6 21.♘d3 ♙f6?!

Again he misses 21...♙e4! with f5 next: 22.♘f2 f5 23.♚h5 ♙f6⇒

22.♘e5

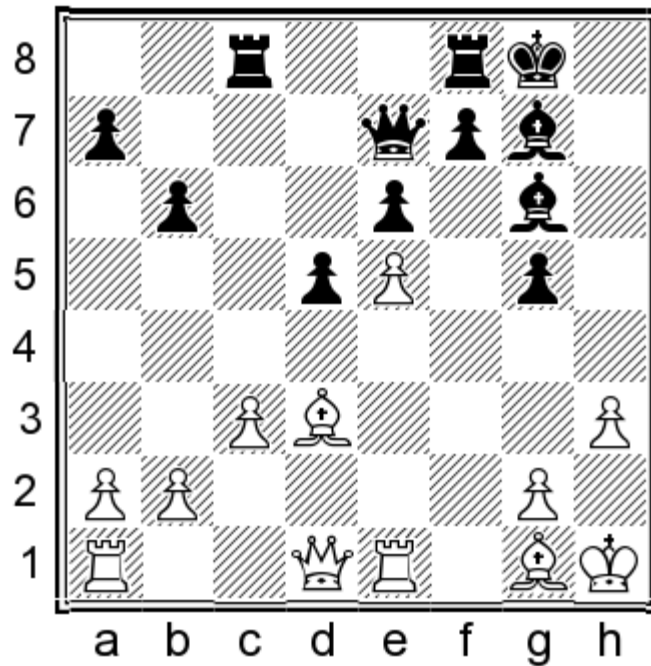
White decided to change the structure and to get the d4 square! An interesting idea was 22.♘f2! with a double purpose; exchanging white bishops with ♙d3; and sending the knight into attack via g4.



22... Nxe5 23. dxe5 Qg7 24. Qd3

With the exchange of bishops the black king is less safe! The white squares around Black's king will be weak, especially h5.

24... Rac8 25. Qg1!±



A great manoeuvre, transferring the bishop to the optimal place-d4.

25... Rxc6 26. Qd4

Black breathes again after 26. Qxg6?! fxg6 27. Qd4 Rf4 with counterplay.

26...♙xd3 27.♚xd3 f5

Weakening his own king even more, but the threat of ♖f1–f6 would force ...f5 sooner or later.

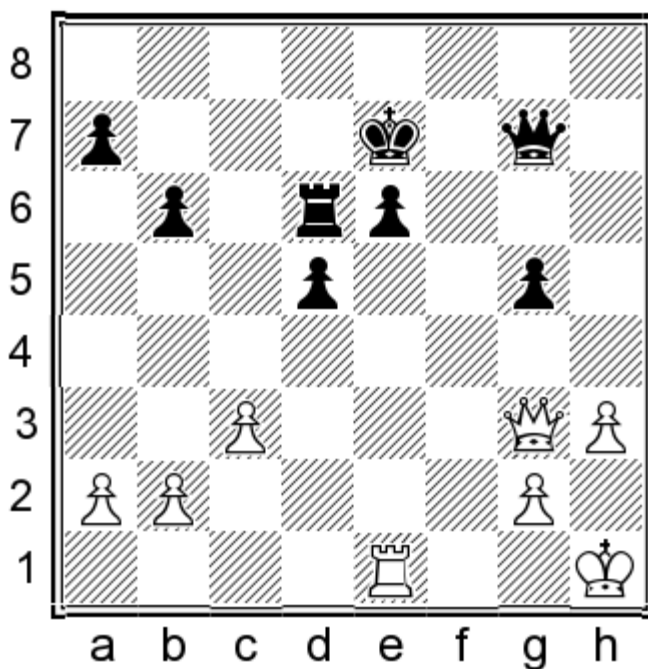
28.exf6 ♙xf6 29.♙xf6 ♚xf6

In the view of his king's position and damaged pawn structure, the defence for Black is really tough. 29...♙xf6 loses faster after 30.♖e5 (30. ♚xd5?? ♖f1+-) 30...♚g7 31.♚b5 ♖c8 32.♖ae1 ♚g6 33.♚d7+-

30.♖f1 ♚g7 31.♖xf8+ ♙xf8 32.♖f1+

More to the point is 32.♚g3! ♙g8 33.♖e1+- and Black doesn't have a good defence against ♖e5!

32...♙e7 33.♚g3 ♖d6 34.♖e1



Strong enough but missing a quicker win after 34.♖f4!+- with the idea of ♖g4.

34...♖d8 35.♖e5 ♖g8 36.♚e1

A double attack! One pawn falls — e6 or d5!

36...♚f6 37.♖xd5 g4

Black is searching for some counterplay!

38.♖d3 gxh3 39.♖xh3 ♚g6?!

The best practical chance was 39...♖h8! entering the queen endgame! Probably time-trouble. 40.♖xh8 ♚xh8+ 41.♙g1±

40.♚h4+ ♚g5?

A blunder on the last move of the time control! After 40...♙d6 the game still wouldn't be at an end. 41.♚f4+ ♙d7

42. ♖f3±

41. ♖xg5+ ♜xg5 42. ♜h7+

1-0

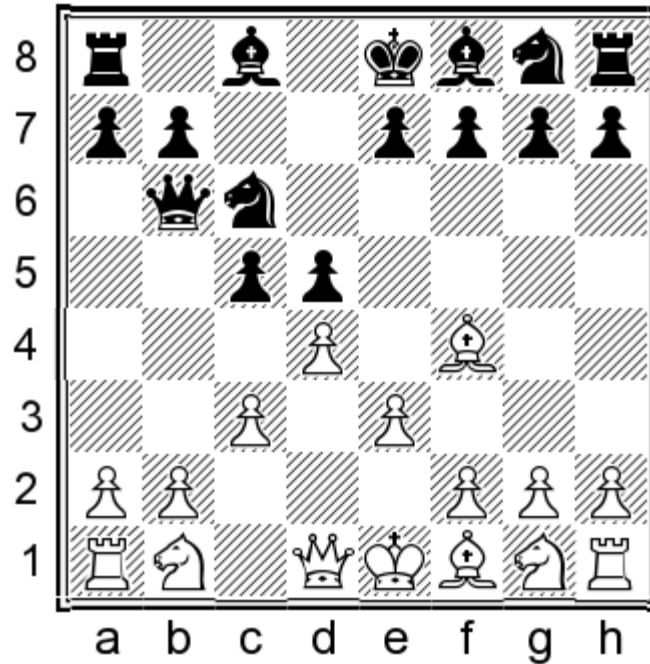
### Lessons to be learned:

1. In a Carlsbad structure with Black's plan of ...g6, best is to develop the white square bishop on e2 -avoiding changes after ♟f5!
2. Bishops are the biggest problem for Black. One from g7 aims at white small fortress c3-d4 and another bishop from f5 shooting into open space.
3. Always prevent Black's move ...e5, otherwise the bishop from g7 can become strong.
4. Play on the kingside and don't worry about the minority attack! Your dark square bishop controls the b8 square.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EARLY ♖b6-c4

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♗b6



The position in the diagram presents at the first sight one of the most aggressive responses against the London System. Black plays the quick 4...♗b6 trying to grab the initiative by attacking the b2 pawn, with idea of forcing White into passive play. My opinion is that the leaders of the Black pieces who choosing this continuation are actually confusing two variations, which will be explained later. Tournament practice has shown that this plan of Black's is dubious.

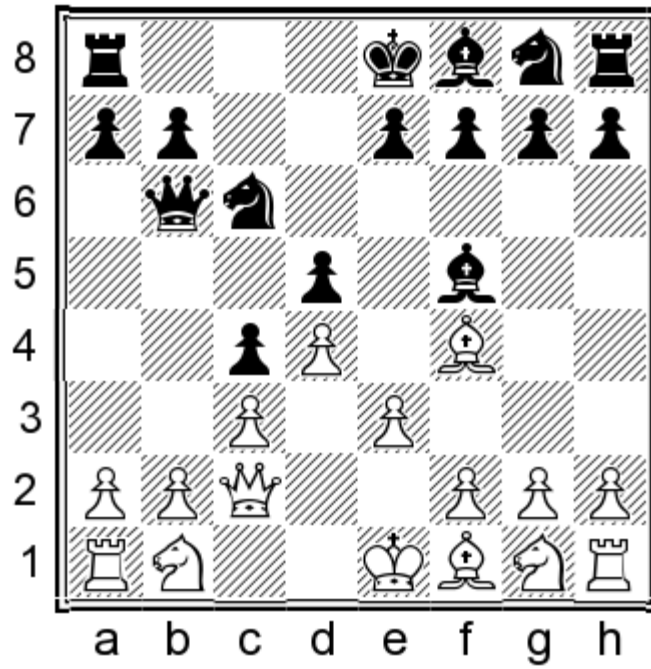
#### 5. ♗b3 c4

Black is offering an endgame but in a different way! It's not a good idea to take: 5...♗xb3? 6.axb3 after which White has comfortable play on the queenside and the very unpleasant threat ♘a3!

#### 6. ♗c2!

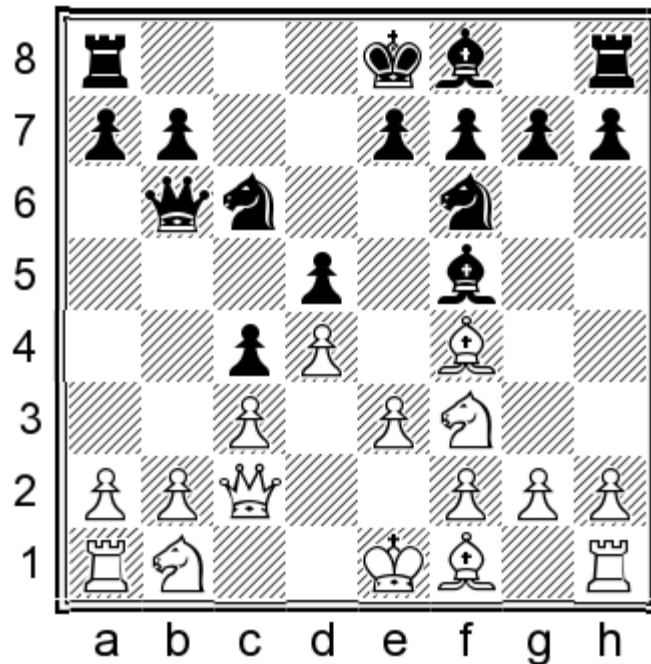
Losing a tempo with the idea being to ruin Black center with b3 or e4! To go for the endgame after 6.♗xb6? would be a big positional mistake. 6...axb6 and now White can't prevent plan b5-b4! With 7.♘a3 Black has 7...e5! 8.♘b5 ♖a5±.

#### 6...♙f5?!



This is a big mistake and seen many times from good grandmasters! Obviously many players are not realizing the difference in the position with the inserted moves ♖f3-♖f6. After 6...♖f6 the important move is 7.♖d2!

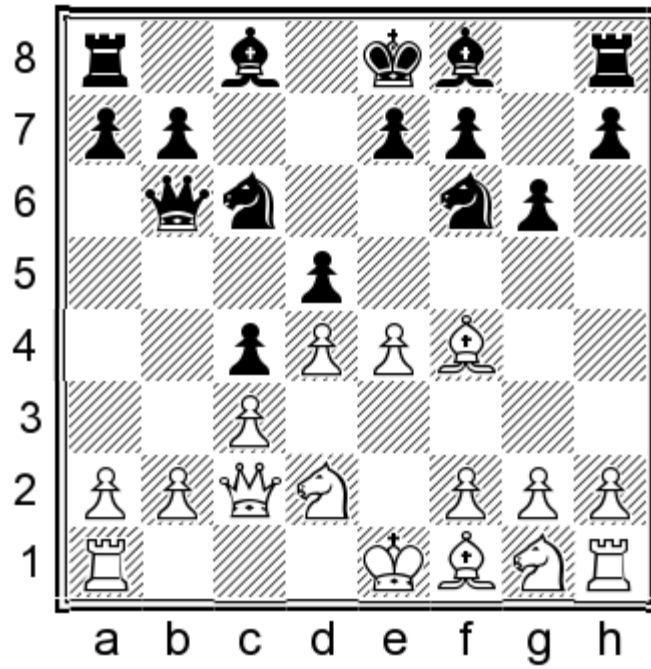
(7.♖f3?! ♔f5!=



This is the famous position which confuses a lot of players! In our move orders we avoid this position.)

7...♖h5

a) 7...g6?! 8.e4!



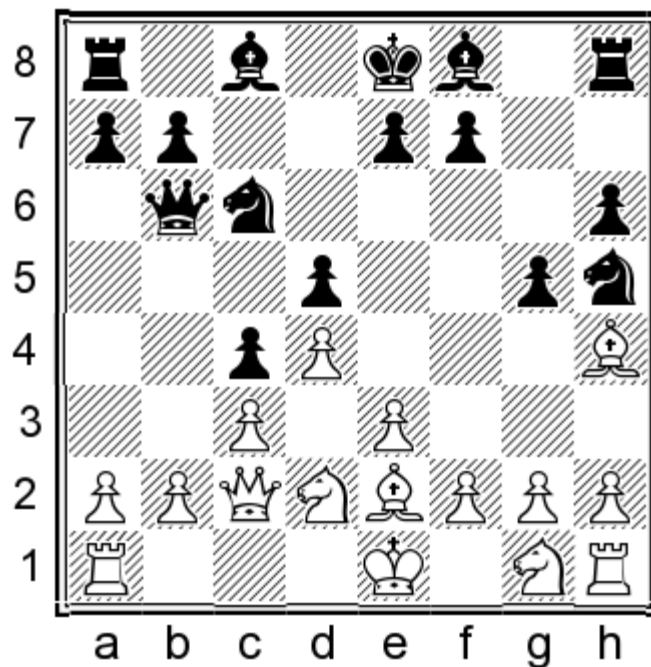
The best way to undermine the center. (8.b3?! ♟f5 9. ♖d1 ♚a5! 10.bxc4 ♜xc3 11. ♗e2 ♜b2 12.a3 12... ♟d3) 8... ♗xe4 (8... dxe4 9. ♗xc4 ♜d8 10. ♗e3±; 8... e6?! would be a big weakening of the dark squares) 9. ♗xe4 dxe4 10. ♟xc4 ♟g7 11. ♟e3±;

b) 7... ♟g4 8. ♟e2!±. See Berkes F.—Rustemov A. Bundesliga 2009.

8. ♟g5

(I have also tried 8. ♟g3!? ♗xg3 9.hxg3 with b3 or e4 next and if Black continue actively in the center with 9...e5? then comes 10.e4!± Sedlak N.-Vasilev M. Blagoevgrad 2013. The point is in the next variation 10...exd4 11.exd5 d3 12. ♚a4±)

8...h6 9. ♟h4 g5 10. ♟e2!



An important move gaining some tempi! 10... ♗g7 11. ♟g3 ♟f5

(11... ♖f5 12.e4 - see Kovacevic V.-Pinter J. EU ch-T 1983.)

12.e4 -see Sedlak N. -Todorovic G. Subotica 2008.

7. ♖xf5!

The pawn d5 is undefended! Here is the most obvious plus of 2. ♕f4! Move orders are very important in this variation.

7... ♖xb2 8. ♖xd5

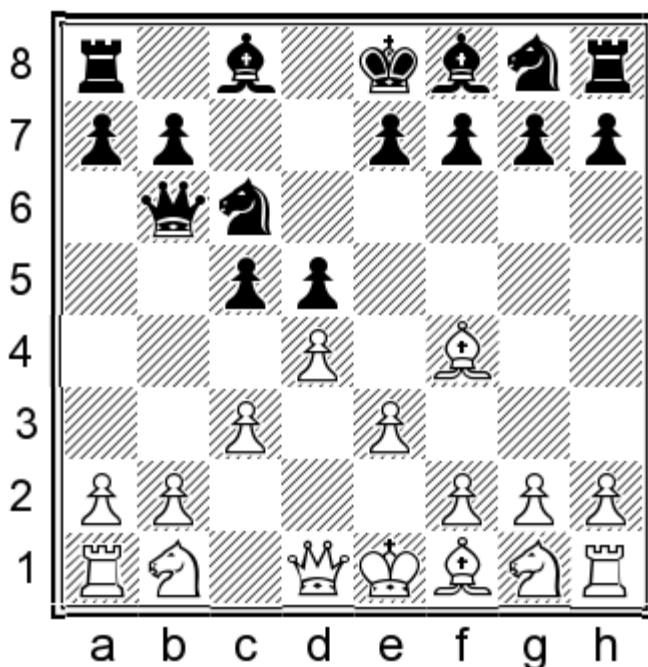
See the games Miles A.-Minasian Ohrid 2001. Sedlak N.-Mihok O. Hun ch-team 2012.

**A. J. Miles (2562) — A. Minasian (2478)**

EU-ch 2nd Ohrid (6), 06.06.2001

In this game Ara Minasian entered a bad line, which he cannot be blamed for because the idea which Anthony Miles used with the exchange sacrifice 7. ♖xf5! was almost new at that time: a time before strong engines and huge chess databases. Black experienced a rapid breakdown after only 19 moves!

1.d4 d5 2. ♕f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♖b6



One of the most aggressive answers for Black. In my opinion, not recommended!

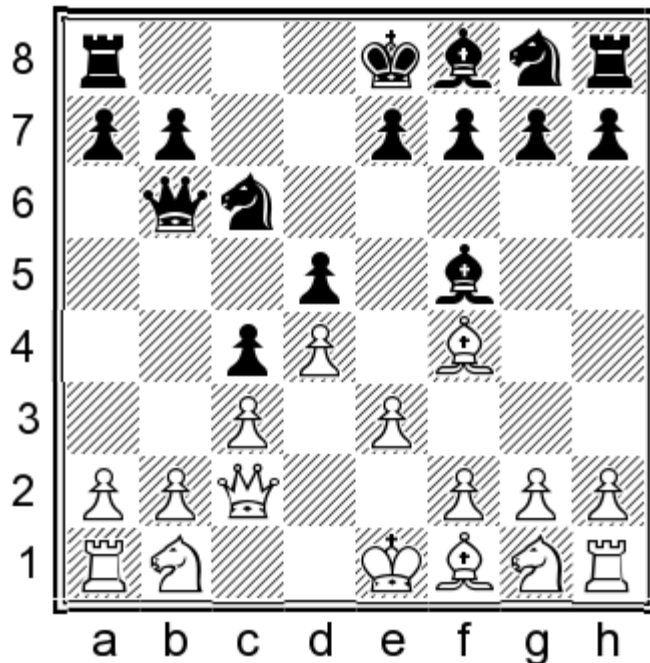
5. ♖b3 c4

This is only good when Black can force the exchange of queens. Otherwise, his center will be undermined, sooner or later, with moves such as b3 or e4. Not 5... ♖xb3? 6.axb3 with a terrible ending.

6. ♖c2

Avoiding a not-so-great endgame, with the idea of ruining Black center with e4 or b3. Bad is 6. ♖xb6?! axb6 7. ♘a3 e5! 8. ♕xe5 (8. ♘b5 ♖a5 9. ♘c7+ ♔d8 10. ♘xd5 ♖xd5 11. ♕xc4 ♖a5+) 8... ♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♕xa3 10.bxa3 ♖xa3

6...♔f5?

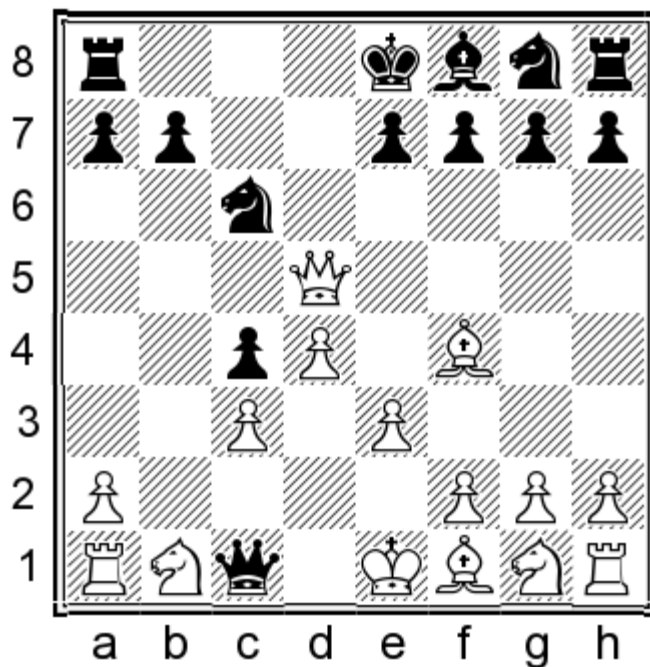


This game was my inspiration for adopting the London. Compared with the position where knights are on f3 and f6, here ...♔f5 comes with a question mark. The pawn on d5 is not defended. After 6...♖f6 7.♗d2! comes and there is no more ...♔f5 threat.

7.♖xf5!

Almost unimaginable for that time! White sacrifices the exchange in a position where he is still undeveloped — and it works well! In this mess, it will turn out that White's king is safer and Black will have huge problems with his queen!

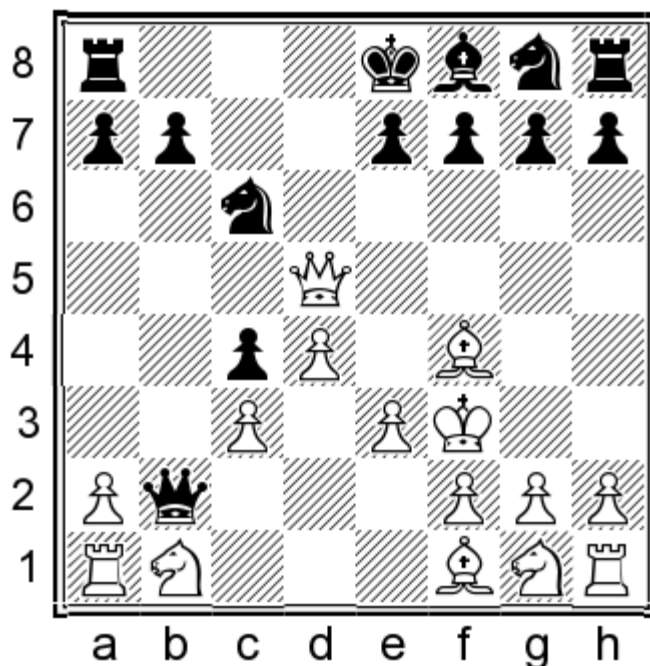
7...♖xb2 8.♖xd5 ♖c1+?!



Black is inserting checks hoping that White's king position in the center will prove to be bad, but Anthony Miles was not so scared and he went to f3! More resilient is 8...♖xa1 as in the next game.

**9.♔e2 ♜b2+ 10.♔f3!**

Black is lacking in the development area, so White's king is safe at f3!



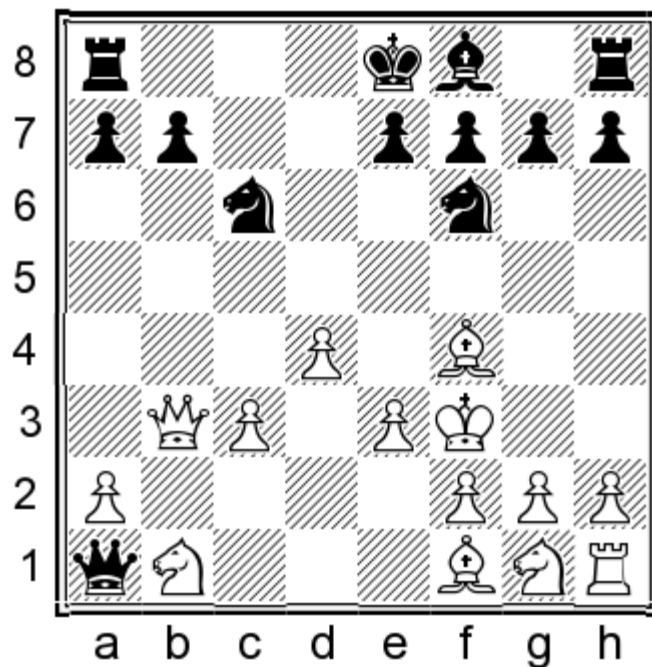
It seems that White is winning after 10.♔d2 but things are messier. 10...♖xa1 11.♜b5 0-0-0 12.g3! with the idea ♔g2. 12...e6 (12...♜xc3 13.♔g2 ♜xd4 14.♔xc6 ♜xd2+ 15.♔f1 ♜d7 16.♔f3 ♜d3+ 17.♔g2+-) 13.♔g2 ♔ge7 14.♔gf3 ♜xa2 (14...♜xc3 15.♜b1 ♜d7 16.♔xc4+- and if 16...♔d5 17.♜xc6+! bxc6 18.♜b8#) 15.♜b1 ♜a6 16.♜xa6 bxa6 17.♔g5 ♔d5 18.♔xd5 ♜xd5 19.♔xf7 ♜g8 20.♔xc4 g5 21.♔cd6+ ♔xd6 22.♔xd6+ ♔d8 23.c4 ♜xd4 24.♔xg5+ ♜xg5 25.exd4+-

**10...♔f6**

Black needs good advice. In the case of 10...♖xa1 11.♔xc4 e6 12.♜b5 0-0-0 13.♔e2 ♔f6 14.♜c1+- next on the agenda is ♔d2.

**11.♜xc4 ♜xa1 12.♜b3!**

Black's queen is doomed. White just has to develop his kingside and pick up the queen!



12...0-0-0 13.♙b5

Development with attack. What more can one wish for?

13...♘a5 14.♚c2 a6 15.♙d3 e5

Minasian did not want to lose in 15 moves. Who can blame him?

16.♙xe5 ♘d7 17.♙f4 ♙e7 18.♘h3 g5 19.♘xg5

1-0

### Lessons to be learned:

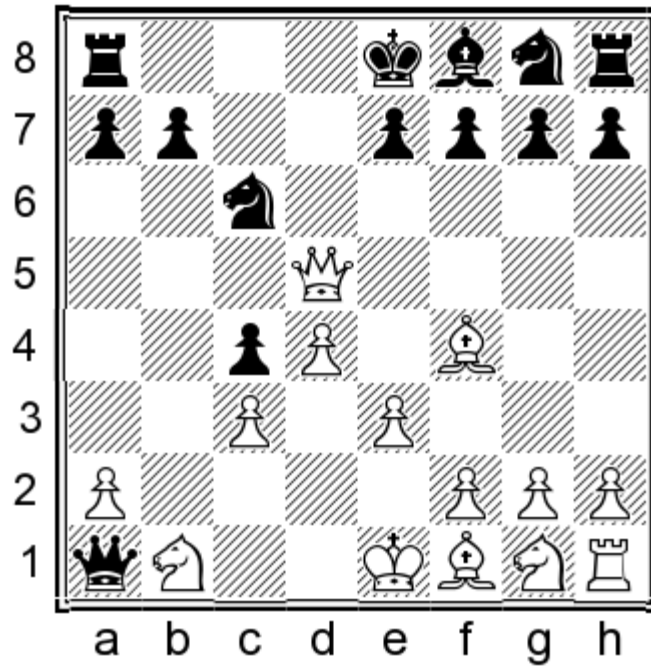
1. With precise move orders in the opening keeping the knight on g1: 1.d4 d5 2.♙f4! c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3! ♚b6 5.♚b3 c4 6.♚c2 you are avoiding a bad endgame and also 6...♙f5
2. In case of the thematic 6...♙f5? after 7.♚f5! the pawn on d5 is undefended!
3. By giving up the rook on a1, Black's queen is misplaced for a long time!

**N. Sedlak (2589) — O. Mihok (2445)**

HUN-chT 1112 Hungary (10), 06.05.2012

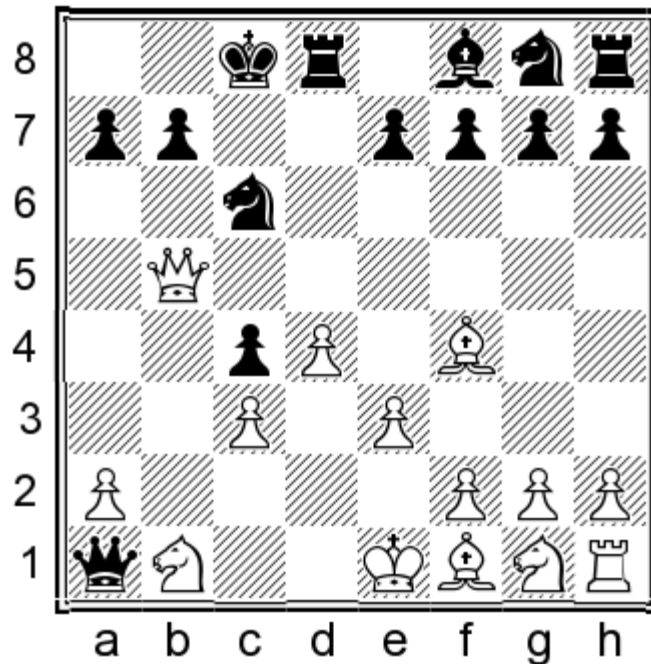
When you play in the Hungarian League, pairings are known only a short time before the start. So, my opponent came unprepared which proved very expensive for him. He entered the position from the previous game Miles A.-Minasian but provided better resistance. We can happily classify this line in the group "traps in the openings".

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♚b6 5.♚b3 c4 6.♚c2 ♙f5? 7.♚xf5! ♚xb2 8.♚xd5 ♚xa1

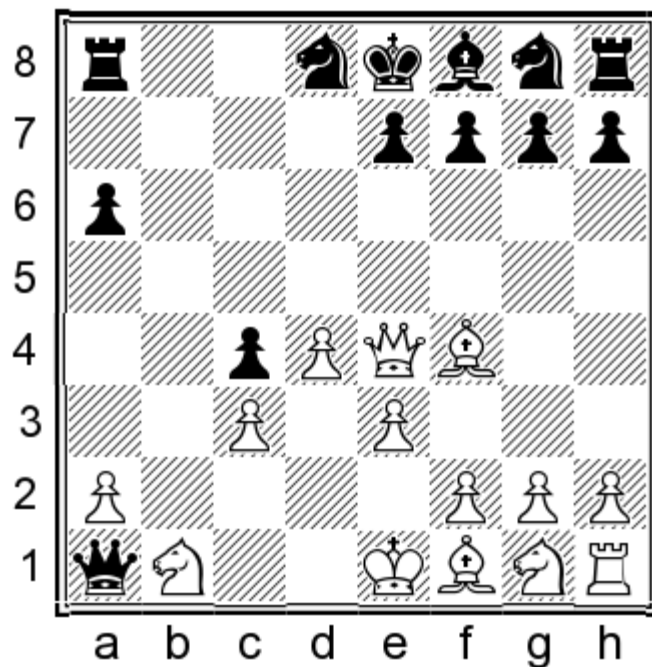


A little improvement compared with the game Miles, A – Minasian, and I was lucky twice in my chess career to reach this position. Czebe tried 8...♖f6? 9.♜xc4 ♘e4 with attacking ideas, but 10.♜b5! ♜xf2+ 11.♚d1+- and I emerged a piece up. Sedlak,N (2512)-Czebe, A (2497) Subotica 2005

9.♜b5 0-0-0?!



At first sight this move looks like the only one! The drawback is that the queen will stay on a1 for a long time! Better practical chances were offered by 9...a6!? 10.♜xb7 ♘d8 11.♜e4!

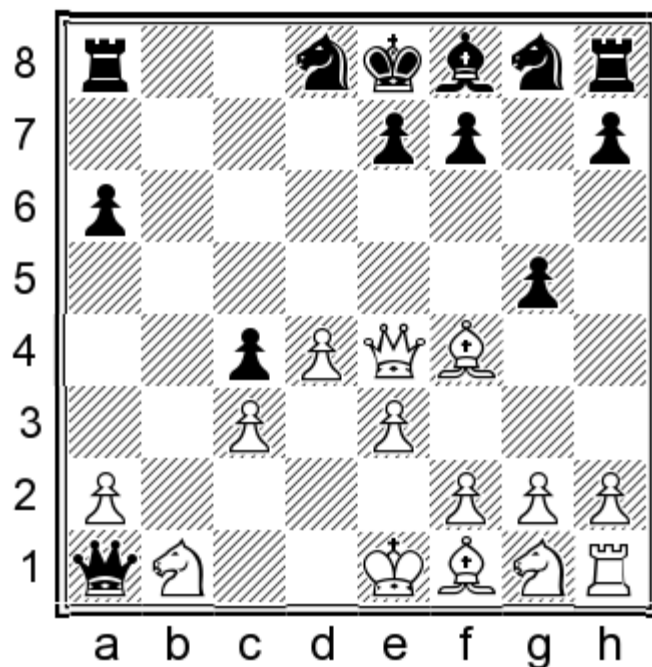


The only move which guarantees an advantage, but a big one in this case.

**a)** 11. ♖xa8 ♜xb1+ 12. ♔e2 e5! (12... ♛d3+? 13. ♕f3! ♛xf1 14. ♙c7 f6 15. ♛xd8+ ♕f7 16. h3±) 13. ♙xe5 ♛d3±;

**b)** 11. ♛b4? e5 12. ♛a4+ ♔e7 13. ♛b4+ ♕d7 14. ♛a4+ ♖c6-+;

11...g5!?



Black wants to remove the bishop from the h2-b8 diagonal and to activate the rook from b8.

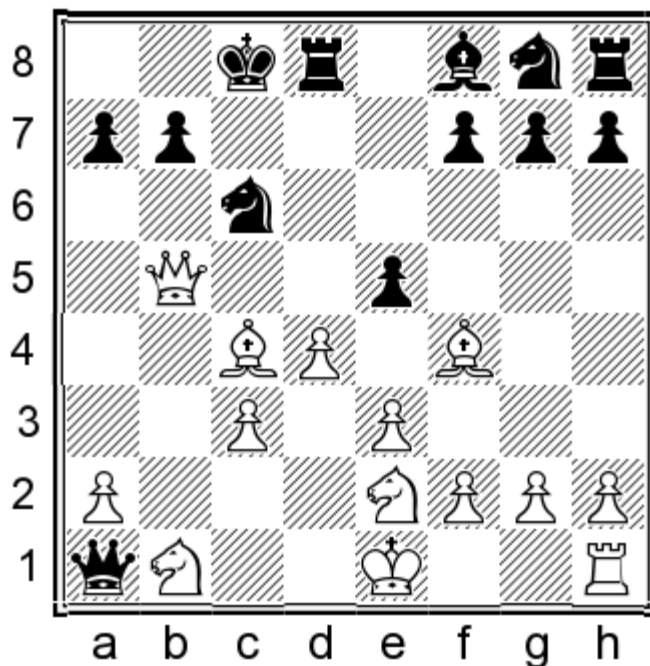
**a)** 11... ♛b2 12. ♙xc4 ♖f6 13. ♛d3 ♛c1+ 14. ♛d1 ♛xd1+ 15. ♕xd1± Two pawns for an exchange, enough for a big advantage in the endgame.

**b)** 11... ♖f6 12. ♛c2 e5 13. ♙xe5 ♖d5 14. ♙xc4 ♖xc3 15. ♛xc3 ♛xb1+ 16. ♔e2 ♙b4 17. ♖f3! ♛xa2+ (17... ♛xh1 18. ♛xb4+- With too many threats. 18... f6 19. ♛a4+ ♔e7 20. ♛a3+ ♔e8 21. ♙b3! fxe5 22. ♛a4+ ♔e7 23. ♛b4+ ♔e8 24. ♖xe5+-) 18. ♙xa2 ♙xc3 19. ♙xg7 ♖g8 20. ♙e5±;

12. ♖c2! (12. ♗e5 gives some chances to Black 12... ♗g7! 13. ♗xc4 ♗xe5 14. dxe5 ♖b8 15. ♗b3 ♖b2 16. ♖e2 ♖e6±; 12. ♗xg5? ♖b8±) 12... ♗g7 13. ♗g3 h5 14. ♗xc4 h4 15. ♗e5 ♗xe5 16. dxe5 ♖c8 17. ♖e2! ♖xc4 18. 0-0-+ with ♖d2 next after which the queen dominates against two rooks! The black rooks lack co-ordination.

### 10. ♖f5+

Good enough; the idea is to return the queen to c2! But maybe even simpler is 10. ♗xc4! e5 11. ♖e2!



The target is the queen on a1. (Not good is 11. ♗xe5? ♖b4! 12. cxb4 ♖xb1+ 13. ♖e2 ♖c2+ 14. ♖f3 ♖f5+ with a draw.) 11...exf4 12. 0-0 ♖f6 13. ♖d2 ♖xf1+ 14. ♖xf1 fxe3 15. fxe3 ♗d6 16. e4± the central pawns are extremely strong! Grachev, B (2640)-Gelfand, B (2720) Moscow 2008.

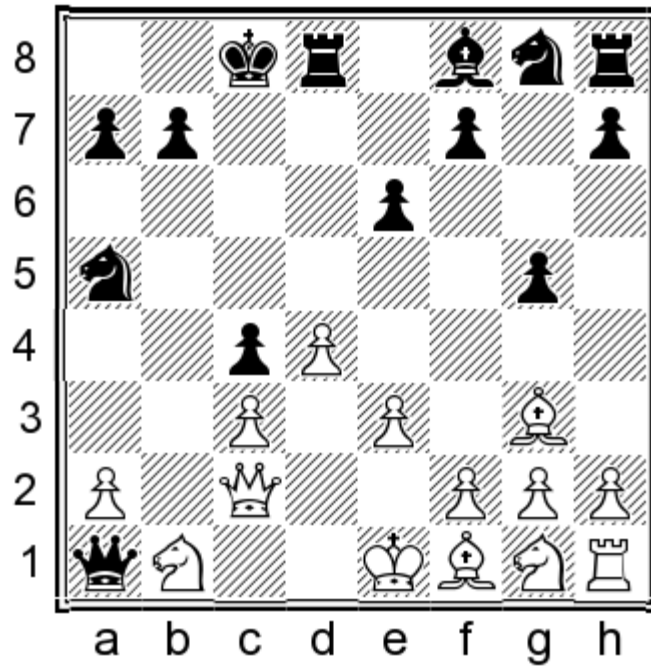
### 10...e6 11. ♖c2 g5!?

With this active move Black tries to disturb the white bishop! Black can solve the problem of his queen with 11... ♗a3 12. ♖f3 ♖b2 13. ♖xa3 ♖xa3 14. ♗xc4 ♖f6 15. 0-0 but now there are new ones concerning his king. The pair of bishops and control of the b-line favors White. Simplification with 15... ♖d5 after 16. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 (16...exd5 17. ♖f5+ ♖d7 18. ♖e5 ♖xe5 19. ♖xe5+-) 17. c4 ♖d7 18. c5± leads nowhere. White's plan is simple: ♖d2-c4!

### 12. ♗g3

A cold-blooded reaction. It was not a good idea to fall for provocation of 12. ♗xg5? ♖d5! 13. ♖f3 ♖b5 14. ♖fd2 ♖xg5 15. ♗xc4 ♗a3+-

### 12... ♖a5!?



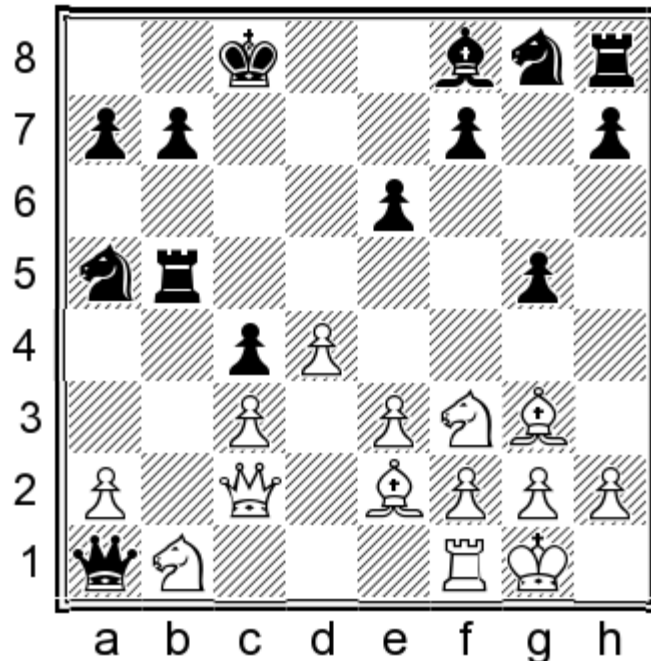
An interesting idea to activate rook through a d5-b5 lift, but again, not good enough. Harassing White's bishop with 12...h5 leads to 13. ♖f3! h4 14. ♗e5 f6 15. ♗xc4! fxe5 16. ♗xe6+ ♖b8 17. 0-0 exd4 18. exd4± and ♖bd2 is next.

Also, after 12...b5 13. ♖f3 ♗b4!? 14. ♖fd2! ♗xc3 15. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 16. ♖xc3 b4 17. ♖ce4 c3 18. ♖b3+-

### 13. ♖f3 ♗d5

Defending the g5 pawn and threatens ...♖b5!

### 14. ♗e2 ♖b5 15. 0-0



Black has saved his queen, but the price is too high. He is underdeveloped with his king still in danger.

### 15...♟f6

15...♞b2 16.♞a4+- with ♘c4! next!

15...♞b2 16.♞e4! ♟c6 (16...♞xe2 17.♞e5 ♟d7 18.♞c7+ ♟e8 19.♟e5 ♘e7 20.♞c8+ ♘d8 21.♞d7+ ♟f8 22.♞xf7#)  
17.♘xc4 ♟f6 18.♞d3+-

### 16.♞a4!

The queen finally enters the attack!

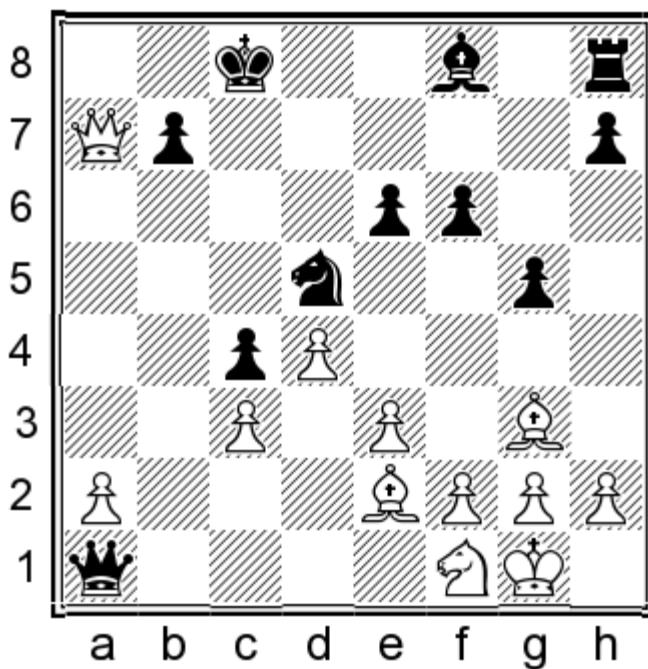
### 16...♞xb1 17.♞xa5 ♟d5

Defending against mate on c7.

### 18.♞xa7 f6

The idea is to cover e5 and protect the g5 pawn.

### 19.♟d2 ♞xf1+ 20.♟xf1!



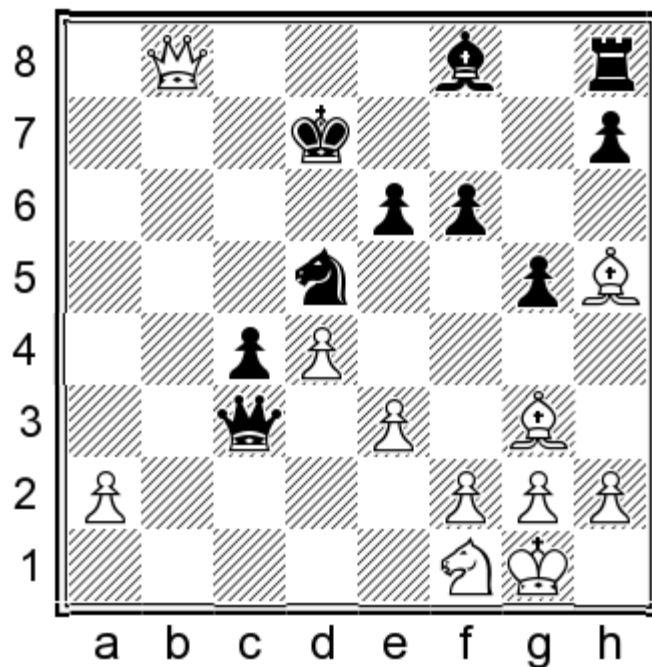
It is crucial to retain a bishop at e2! From h5 he becomes an attacking monster. After 20.♟xf1? the position is not so clear 20...♟xc3 21.♞a8+ ♟d7 22.♞xb7+ ♟e8 and now White's king has some safety issues.

### 20...♞xc3

Now a force win arises. Protecting the b7 pawn with 20...♞b2 also leads to a loss after 21.♞b8+ ♟d7 22.♘h5! ♘g7 23.♞d6+-.

### 21.♞b8+ ♟d7 22.♞xb7+ ♟d8 23.♞b8+ ♟d7 24.♘h5!

As I said before...



24...e5

Closing one diagonal, but opening another!

25.♔g4+ ♖c6 26.♚a8+ ♖d6 27.♚d8+ ♖c6 28.♔d7+ ♖d6 29.♔e8+

with ♚d7 mating. Conclusions for this game are exactly the same as in the previous game Miles A.-Minasian A. Ohrid 2001. Black encountered the same problems after 6...♔f5?

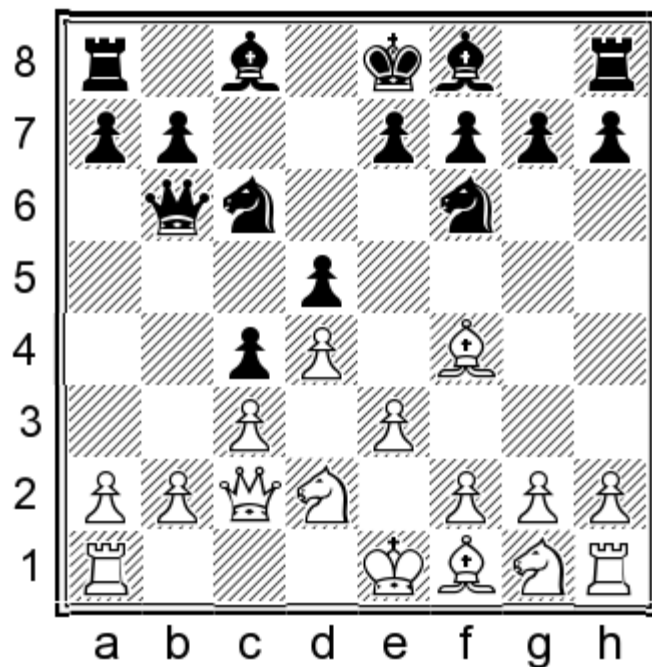
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**V. Kovacevic (2555) — J. Pinter (2535)**

EU-chT (Men) 08th Plovdiv (1.4), 1983

In this game Black avoided the opening trap of the two previous games. In this game the moves ♖f6-♖d2 were inserted, after which Black used a dubious plan of taking the bishop pair but weakening his kingside with h6-g5. The squares g4-h5 around Black king became very weak, a factor which was skilfully punished by Vlatko Kovacevic!

1.d4 d5 2.♔f4 ♖f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♖c6 5.♖d2 ♚b6 6.♚b3 c4 7.♚c2±



Compared with the previous two games in this position the moves ♖d2-♖f6 are inserted! White provoked c4 with the idea of undermining Black's center with b3 or e4! Of the view that it's impossible to prevent this, Black decides to take the bishop pair.

**7...♗h5**

The move 7...g6 is mentioned in the introduction to chapter 2.

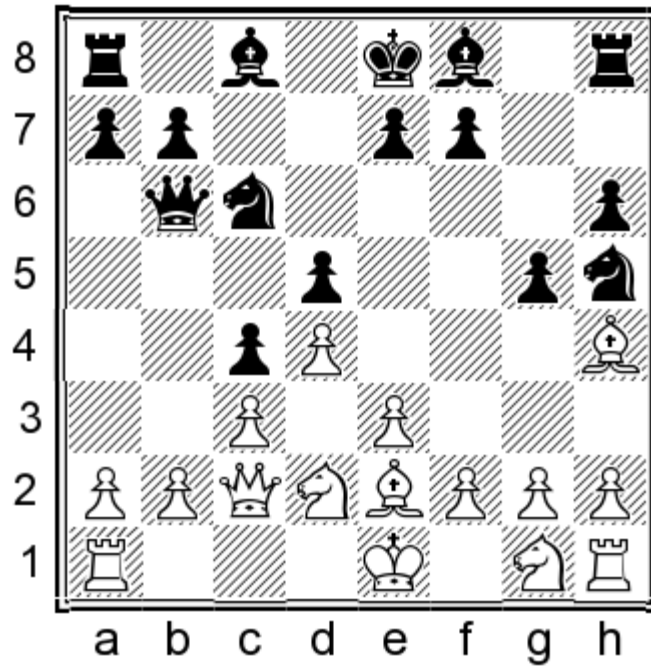
**8.♙g5**

Provoking a weakening.

**8...h6 9.♙h4 g5**

Such aggressive play implies consequences.

**10.♙e2!**



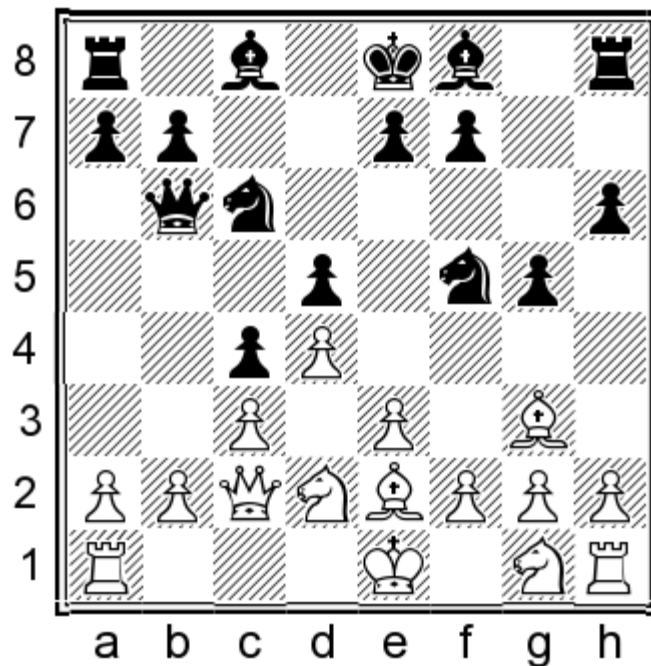
A very important intermediate move with White grabbing a tempo! This motif is famous also from other openings.

10...Ng7

With this move Black is avoiding bad structures! 10...gxh4 11.♙xh5±

or 10...♘f4 11.exf4 gxh4 12.♙h5 ♖g8 13.g3±

11.♙g3 ♘f5

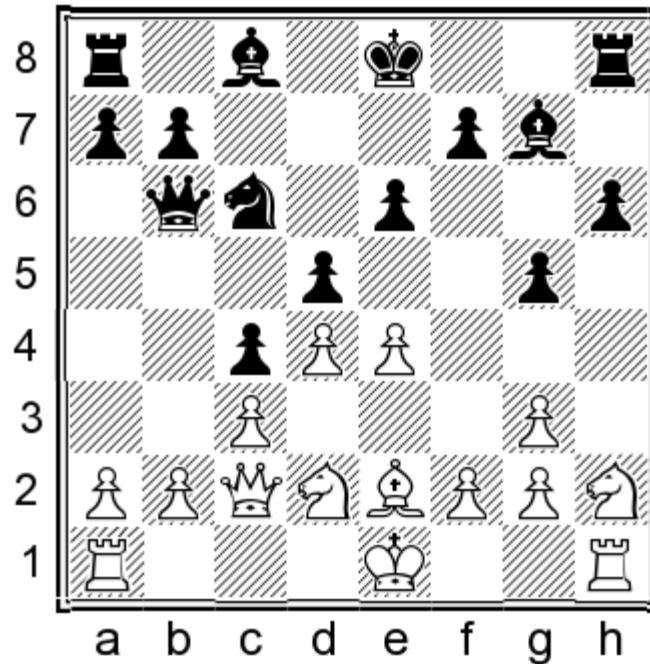


Black takes the bishop pair after losing a lot of time. Everything has its price!

12.♘gf3 ♙g7 13.e4 ♘xg3 14.hxg3

Both sides have fulfilled their ideas! White has conducted his main idea e4 while Black gains the bishop pair.

14...e6 15.♘h2!

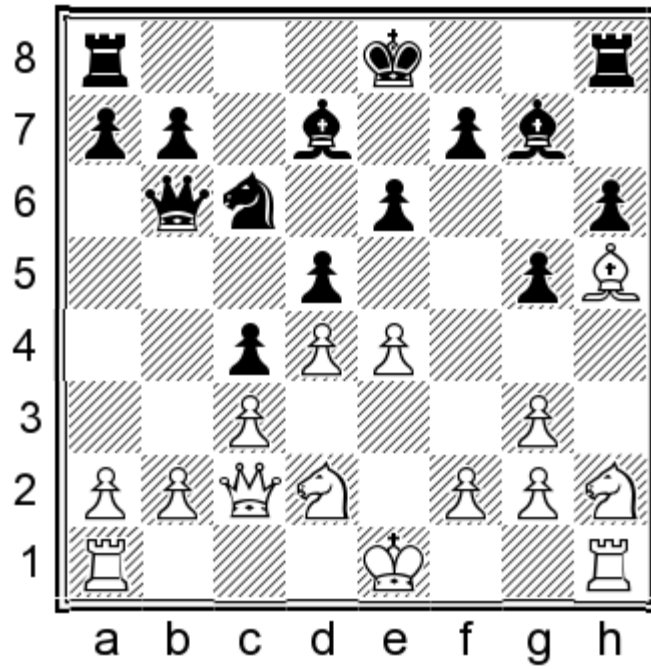


White is using the light squares on the kingside and aiming to put a bishop on h5! An advantage also comes from 15.g4!? ♕d7 16.e5± with the maneuver ♜f1-g3-h5

15...♕d7

After 15...h5 Black would have other kinds of problems 16.♘hf1 g4 17.♘e3 ♘e7 18.0-0-0± and the h5 pawn is weak after doubling rooks on the h file.

16.♕h5?!



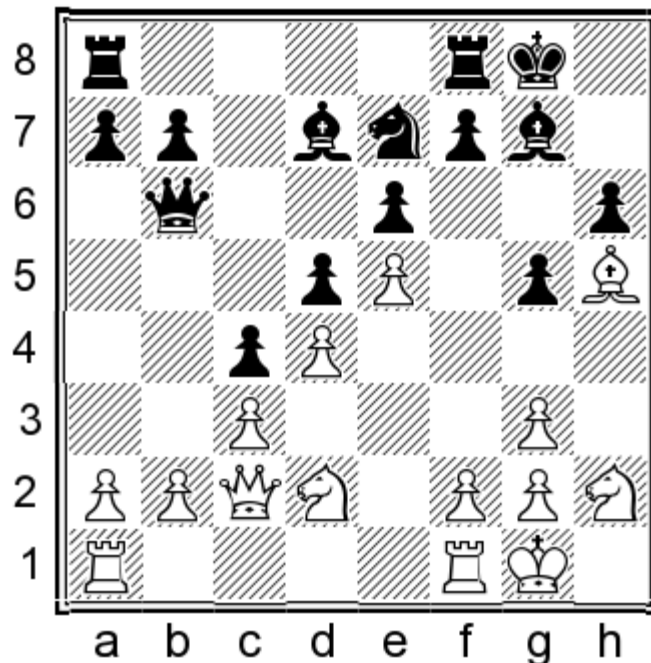
This is a little bit careless, giving Black some counterplay. White was supposed to play first 16. ♖g4! not allowing any counterplay 16... ♗e7 17. ♗e3 ♜c7 18. ♙h5±

**16... ♗e7?!**

Failing, but an interesting try nonetheless! Black should search for counterplay with 16... ♗xd4!? 17. cxd4 ♙xd4 18. 0-0 c3 19. ♗df3 (19. bxc3? ♙xc3 20. ♜xc3 ♞c8 21. ♜xc8+ ♙xc8) 19... cxb2+ 20. ♔b1 ♞c8 21. ♜b3 ♙c3 22. ♜xb6 axb6±

**17.0-0 0-0 18.e5!±**

Now the weaknesses are felt more acutely around the black king.



18...f5

Black was forced into this reaction. What else against ♖g4-f4?

19.exf6 ♜xf6 20.♗g4 ♜f5 21.♗f3

Black position is terrible! White controls all the important squares!

21...♞d6 22.♞fe1 ♙e8

Exchanging his bad bishop, but the e6 pawn also becomes weaker.

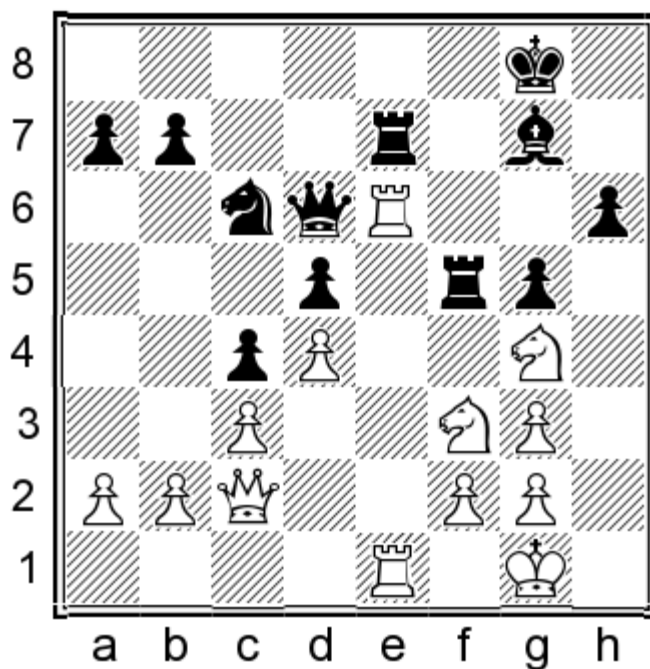
23.♙xe8 ♜xe8 24.♞e2

White doubles his rooks on the e-file after which all his pieces will be focused on weaknesses in Black position!

24...♗c6 25.♞ae1 ♞e7?

Blundering a pawn in a really difficult position. The only move to save a pawn was 25...♞d7± but still Black has too many weaknesses. White can continue by also taking space on the queenside with 26.b4! cxb3 27.axb3±

26.♞xe6!+-



The protection of the black rook on f5 is gone!

26...♞xe6 27.♞xf5 ♞xe1+ 28.♗xe1 ♗e7 29.♞f3 ♞g6

With ...♞b1 next Black hopes to make some counterplay!

30.♗f1!

Prophylactic moves are almost always good in technical positions.

30...b5

30...♖b1 31.♗f6+ ♕xf6 32.♖xf6+-

31.♗e3 ♖e6 32.a3 a5 33.g4

Fixing the pawns and creating a stronghold on f5 for the knight.

33...b4 34.axb4 axb4 35.♗1c2

Now the d5 pawn falls after ♗b4.

35...b3 36.♗b4 ♕xd4

A last try!

37.cxd4 c3 38.bxc3 b2 39.♖d1 ♖e4 40.♗d3

and a black pawn is caught.

1-0

### Lessons to be learned:

1. Against Black action on the kingside with h6-g5 never forget to insert the important intermediate move ♕e2 taking a tempo by attacking the knight on h5!
2. Use the weak squares in Black's position, putting the bishop on h5 and a knight on g4, with the plan ♗h2-♕h5-♗g4!
3. After the typical push e4, close the center with e5 taking space! Bishops are weaker than knights in closed position!

**N. Sedlak (2576) — G. M. Todorovic (2479)**

SRB-chT Subotica (8), 09.09.2008

In this game, compared to the previous one, Black used another plan. In the position after 11.♕g3 my opponent tried 11...♕f5, putting the bishop on g6 after Whites move e4 with the idea to sustain pressure on the center. However, the black knight on g7 is left awkwardly placed. Later, Black tried to bring him into the game via h5, but he missed an exchange sacrifice after which his center was broken apart.

1.d4 d5 2.♕f4 c5 3.e3 ♗c6 4.c3 ♖b6 5.♖b3 c4 6.♖c2 ♗f6 7.♗d2 ♗h5 8.♕g5 h6 9.♕h4 g5 10.♕e2!

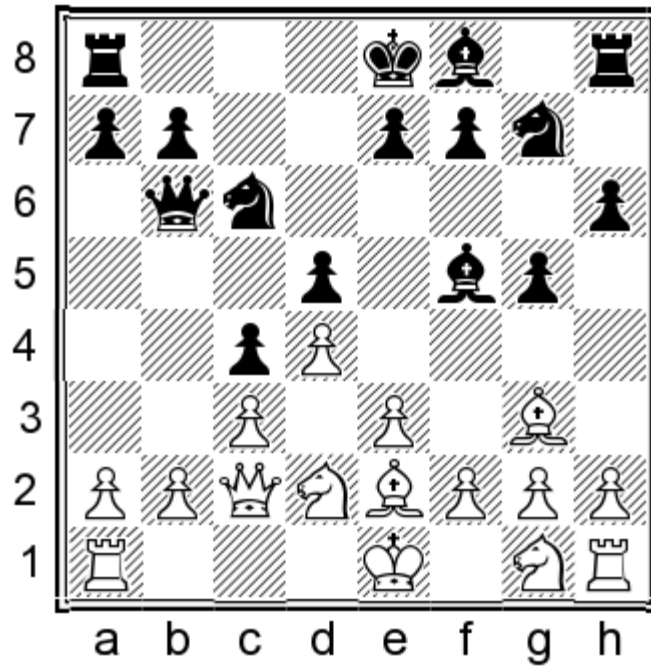
Gaining the tempo!

10...♗g7

Black doesn't have a better option! 10...gxh4 11.♕xh5±

10...♗f4 11.exf4 gxh4 12.♕h5 ♖g8 13.g3±

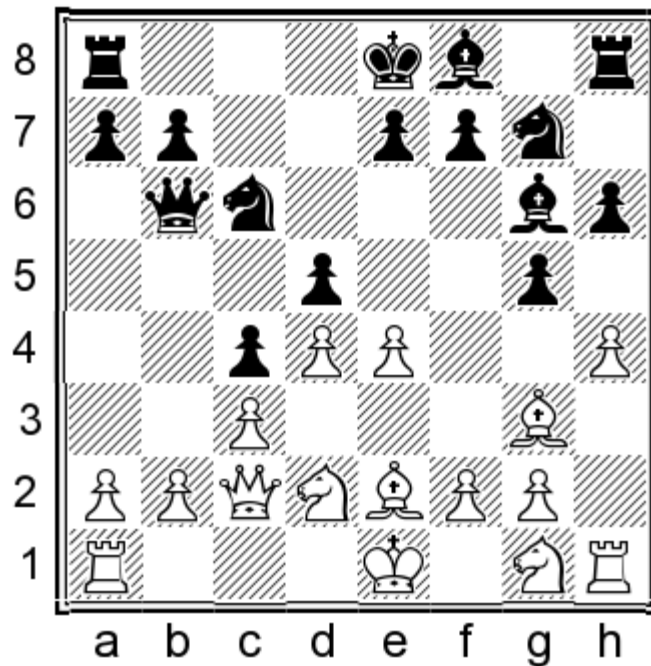
11.♕g3 ♕f5



Actually only from here does the game take a different track way from the previous one! 11...♘f5 Kovacevic V.-Pinter J. EU chT 1983.

**12.e4 ♗g6 13.h4!**

A good decision with the idea being to spoil Black's pawn structure and enter the rook into the game!



**13...gxh4 14.♙xh4**

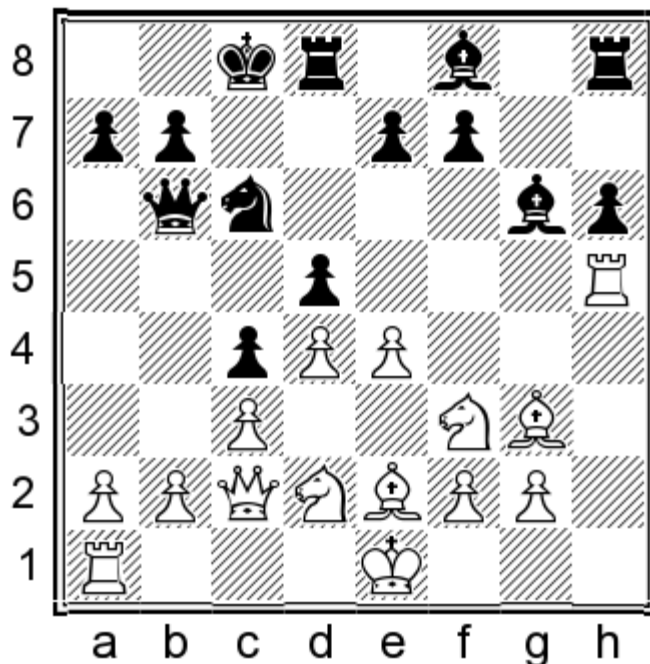
Short castling was not occupying my thoughts. It was more important to add the rook into play, while the white king will be safe on f1!

### 14...0-0-0 15.♘g3 ♘h5?

Black overlooks an exchange sacrifice in his wish to have the double threats ...♘g3 and ...♘f6. With a similar idea to bring knight to f6, much better was 15...♘e8! 16.b3 ♘f6 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.♙xe5 ♗g8 19.bxc4 ♘xe4 20.♖b3 ♘xd2 21.♙xd2 dxc4 22.♗xc4+ ♖c6 23.♗xc6+ bxc6±

### 16.♗xh5!+-

Deflecting the bishop from the diagonal. Black's center crumbles after this one!



### 16...♗xh5 17.exd5 ♗xd5

17...♙g6 doesn't save the day. 18.♖d1 ♘a5 (18...♗xd5 19.♘xc4 ♖d8 20.♘fe5 ♘xe5 21.♘xe5±) 19.♘e5 ♗xd5 20.♘dxc4 ♘xc4 21.♙xc4±

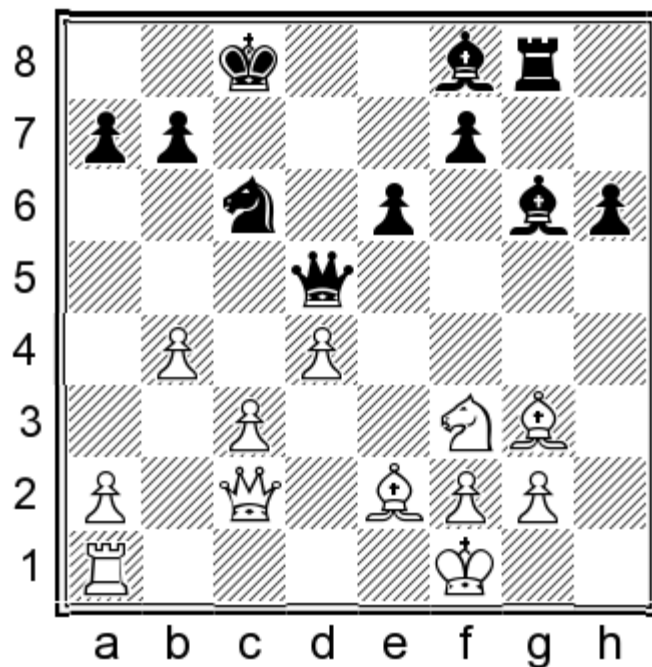
### 18.♘xc4 ♖d8 19.♘e3 e6

Black was forced to return the exchange. 19...♗d7 20.d5 ♗xd5 (20...♙g6 21.♖a4+-) 21.♘xd5 ♖xd5 22.♗d1 ♖e6 23.♘d4+-

### 20.♘xd5 ♖xd5 21.♙f1 ♗g8 22.b4?!

An incautious, nervous move. Better is to activate the rook with 22.♗d1 and c4 comes next, and 22...♖xa2 fails to 23.d5! ♙g6 24.♖c1 exd5 25.♖f4 ♖a5 26.♗xd5 ♖b6 27.♘d4+-

### 22...♙g6?



The last chance was 22...♙xf3! entering into complications 23.♙xf3 ♖c4+ 24.♗e2 (24.♔g1 ♜xd4 25.♗e4 ♜xf3+ 26.♗xf3 ♗g4 27.♗xf7 ♙d6 28.♞e1 ♙xg3 29.fxg3 ♗xg3 30.♗xe6+ ♔b8 31.♗e5+ ♗xe5 32.♞xe5 ♞g3±) 24...♗xc3 25.♞d1 ♜xd4 26.♗e5 ♗c4+ 27.♔g1 ♜xf3+ 28.gxf3 ♞xg3+ 29.fxg3 ♗xb4 30.♞c1+ ♔d8 31.♔h1 Necessary. 31...♗d6 32.♗f6+ ♙e7 33.♗c3 ♙f8 34.♗c8+ ♔e7 35.♗xb7+ ♔f6 36.♗b2+±

23.♗a4

There is no defence against the coming b5!

23...♙e4

23...a6 24.b5 axb5 25.♗a8+ ♔d7 26.♗xb7++-

24.b5 ♜d8 25.♗xa7 ♞xg3

The only way to prolong the surrender!

26.♗a8+ ♔d7 27.fxg3 ♙d6 28.g4 ♔e8?

Blundering a queen! Black could continue to fight with 28...♙xf3 29.♙xf3 (29.gxf3 h5) 29...♗xb5+ 30.♙e2 ♗b2 31.♗a4+ ♔e7 32.♞d1 ♗xc3 33.♙f3+-

29.c4

Conclusion: In this game the most important moment was 13.h4! which presents the refutation of a generally very dubious set-up for Black.

1-0

F. Berkes (2645) — A. Rustemov (2520)

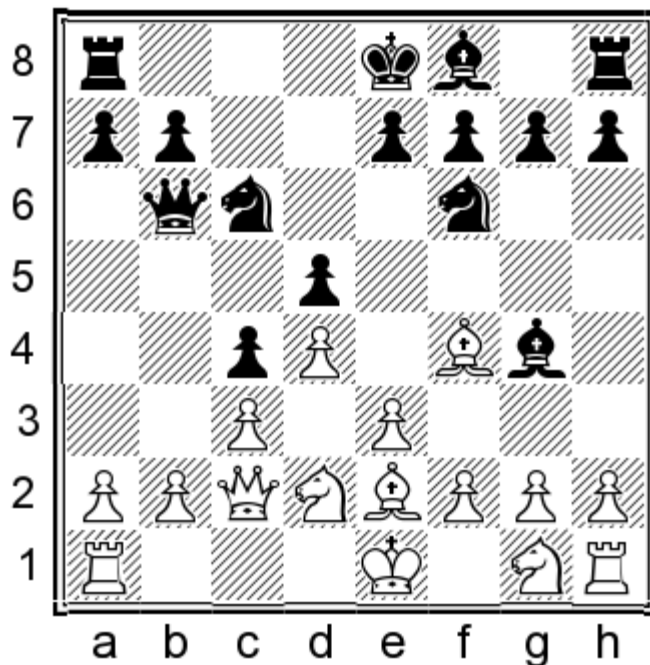
Germany (14.2), 28.03.2009

In this game the main characteristic is how White regroups his pieces and leads out the attack after the nicely prepared — and typical push — e4 in the London System. In this game again with the inserted moves ♖d2 & ...♗f6, Black chose 7...♙g4 with the idea of ...e6 next, which allows White to push e4. White continued the game excellently after which he won in an attractive way.

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 ♗f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♗c6 5.♗d2 ♚b6 6.♚b3 c4 7.♚c2 ♙g4

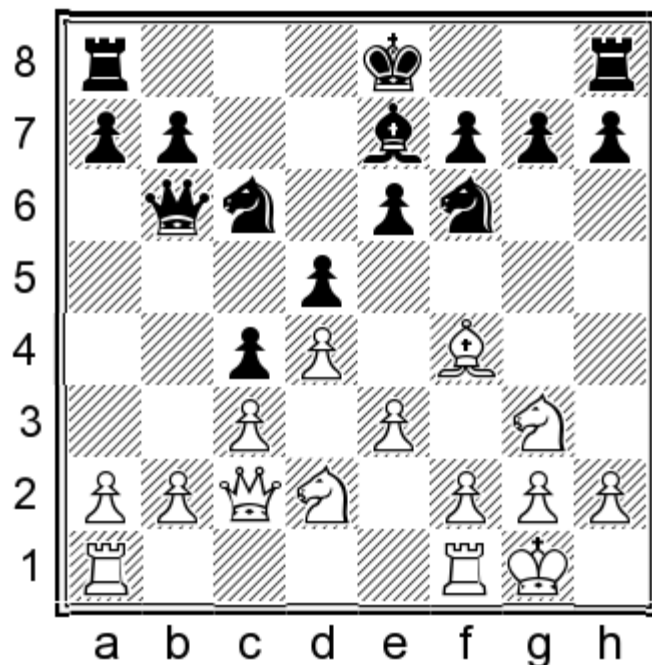
Pay attention! Here is the difference in comparison to the previous two games where we have seen 7...♗h5

8.♙e2!?



The most logical decision in order to complete development as soon as possible! Ruining the center with 8.b3 also makes a lot of sense 8...cxb3 9.axb3 ♚c8 10.♚b1 e6 11.♙d3 ♙e7 12.h3 ♙h5 13.♗gf3 0-0 14.0-0± with a better structure for White. The plan is b4-♗b3-♗c5

8...♙xe2 9.♗xe2 e6 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♗g3!



White has to first prepare e4! 11.e4?! ♖xe4 12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♙xe4 0-0 14.♖ab1 ♜ad8= and White doesn't have nice co-ordination. The rook on b1 and knight on e2 are awkwardly placed.

### 11...0-0

With the annoying move 11...h5?! Black gives up the g5 square to the White bishop. For example: 12.h3 h4 13.♗e2 ♜d8 14.b3 b5 15.a4 a6 16.axb5 axb5 17.bxc4 bxc4 18.♙g5± and now Black has to worry about his h4 pawn and the position of his king.

### 12.e4

White has achieved what he planned. He has full control of the center!

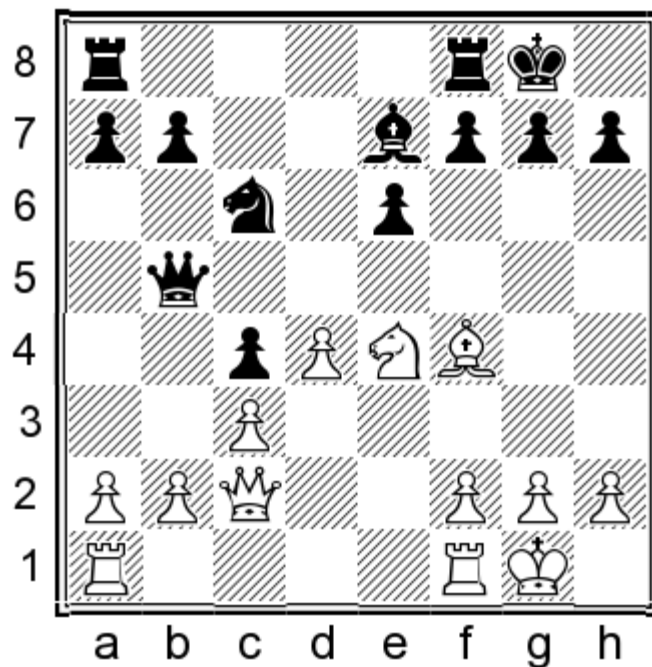
### 12...♗xe4

If Black doesn't react in the center, and continues instead with 12...♜d8, then comes 13.e5 ♗d7 14.♞ae1! (14.b4?! with the idea to prevent counterplay on the queenside doesn't work because Black has the strong answer 14...b5 15.a4 a5! 16.axb5 ♗xd4! 17.cxd4 axb4⇌) 14...b5 15.♞e3! All the pieces are entering into attack 15...♞e8 (the adventurous move 15...g5 takes a bishop but at a big cost! 16.♗e2! gxf4 17.♞h3 f5 18.♗xf4 ♞f7 19.♗xe6 ♜c8 20.♗f4±) 16.♗h5 g6 (16...♗f8 17.♞h3 ♗g6 18.♙e3 b4 19.f4 ♜d7 20.g4→) 17.♙h6! ♙g5 18.♙xg5 ♜xg5 19.♞h3, Black has big weaknesses around his king.

### 13.♗xe4 dxe4 14.♗xe4±

A stable center and more space gives good hopes of building an attack on the kingside. Changing the structure with 14.♗xc4?! looks to be going in for unnecessary complications 14...♜a6 15.♗e3 (15.♗d6 ♙xd6 16.♙xd6 ♗xd4 17.cxd4 ♜xd6 18.♜xe4 ♜b6⇌; 15.♗e5 g5 16.♗xc6 ♜xc6 17.♙g3 ♞ad8⇌) 15...g5 16.♙g3 f5 17.d5 ♗d8!⇌

### 14...♜b5?



The wrong plan which leads Black into a passive position. A better defensive plan was to add the rook into play via the 5th rank. 14...♖fd8 15.♗fe1 ♘d5 16.♗e3 ♗f5! 17.♙g3 ♚d8 18.♗ae1 b5 and the position looks stable. The rook on the 5th rank causes difficulties for White's attack.

**15.♗fe1 ♘d5 16.♗e3**

The rook lift, entering the attack via the 3rd rank on g3 or h3!

**16...b5 17.♗ae1 ♗ae8**

Black is condemned to sit and wait while White has a free hand to play in the center and on the kingside. The only active plan — with 17...b4? — doesn't work because the pawn on c4 becomes weak. 18.♚e2 a5 19.♗g3 ♖h8 20.♘d2±

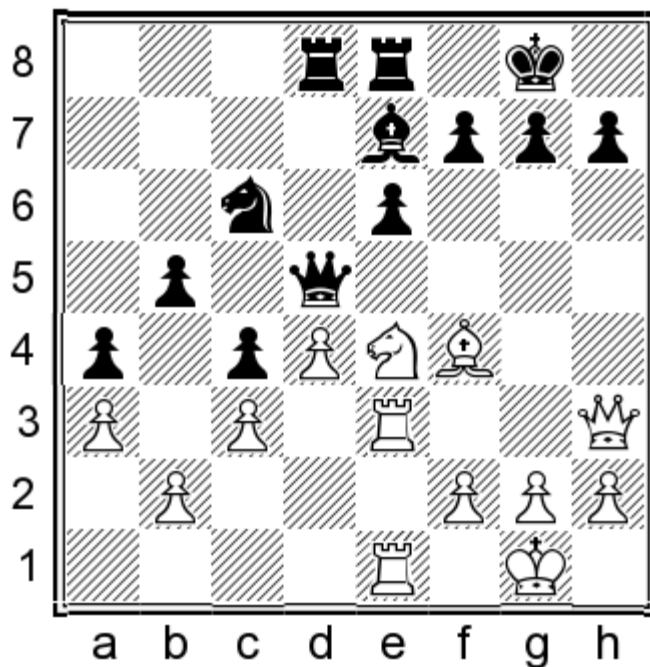
**18.♚e2!**

The queen is also needed to help in attack.

**18...a5 19.a3 a4**

Black closed the queenside because he couldn't face thinking about White's a4 every move, but on the other hand Black has now lost all chances to play on the queenside.

**20.♗f3 ♘d8 21.♗h3 ♗fe8?**



A blunder, probably in time trouble! The safest move was 21...♔h8 22.♖d2! (22...♞g3 ♜f5! =) 22...♙d6 23.♙xd6 ♜xd6 24.♗f3± and it's just matter of when Black will fall. There are many concerns in his position, for example, how to react after the following series: ♗e5, ♗g5, ♞e4-♞h4.

### 22.♞g3+- f6?!

The fastest way to lose! 22...♔h8 23.♗g5! ♙xg5 24.♞xg5 e5 25.♞h5! h6 26.♙xh6 ♔g8 27.♙g5 f6 28.♙xf6 gxf6 29.♞h8+ ♔f7 30.♞h7+ ♔g8 31.♜h5+-

22...♜f5 23.♜h6 ♙f8 24.♙d6! ♔h8 25.♙xf8 gxf6 26.♙g7+ ♔g8 27.♗f6+ ♜xf6 28.♙xf6+ ♔f8 29.♞g7+-

### 23.♜h6 ♙f8

This allows ♗f6 next but between two bad choices something had to be picked! 23...g6 24.♞xg6+ hxg6 25.♜xg6+ ♔h8 26.♜h6+ ♔g8 27.♞e3+-

### 24.♗xf6+ ♔f7 25.♜h4!

White finishes the game in an elegant way!

### 25...♙e7

25...gxf6 26.♜xh7+-

### 26.♞xg7+ ♔xg7 27.♜h6+ ♔f7 28.♗xd5

A nice game by GM Berkes!

### 1-0

### Lessons to be learned:

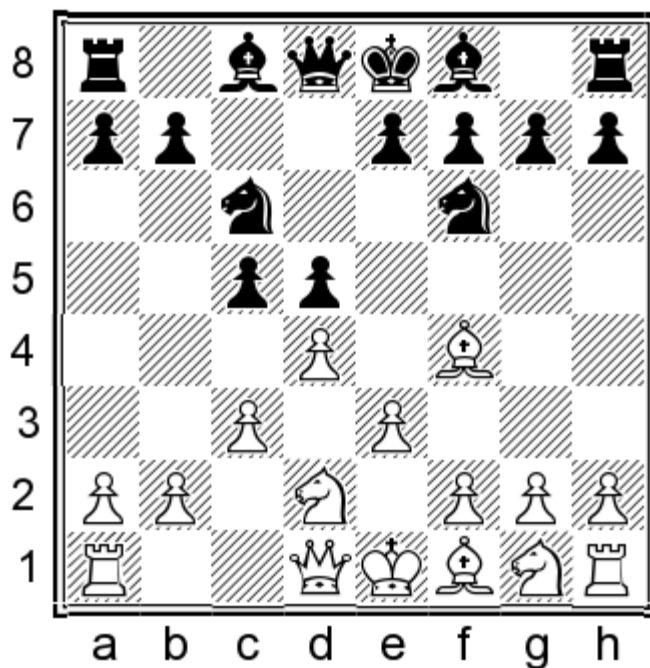
1. Before pushing e4, always try to evaluate the consequences of that move. You must not be unprepared! <http://www.chess.com>

2. After a well-prepared e4, White gains the possibility to build an attack on the black king, but use all the pieces!
3. Black cannot make counterplay on the queenside with ...b4, because c4 will be weak!

# CHAPTER THREE

## CLASSICAL SET-UP WITHOUT e6

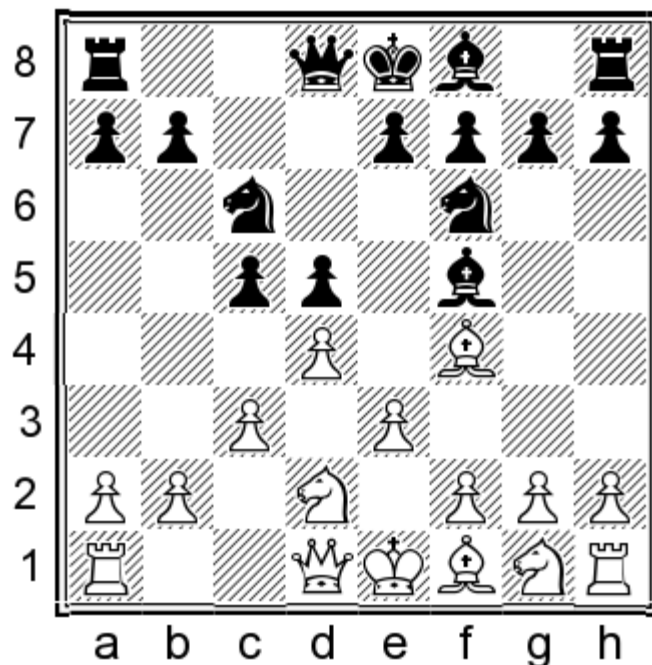
1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♘d2



In this chapter we will show a classical set-up for Black with the idea of developing the light square bishop “outside” the pawn chain before the ...e6 move, so as not to lock him in.

5...♗f5

In this position the biggest dilemma is that White can exploit the absence of the light square bishop by putting pressure on the queenside.



5...♖b6 will be also be displayed as a very important continuation 6.♗b3 ♕f5 (6...g6 7.♗xb6 axb6 8.♕c7! See Sedlak N.-Miranovic R. Osijek 2008. 6...c4 is a transposition to CHAPTER 2.) 7.dxc5! ♗xb3 8.axb3± See Delchev A.-Behling R. Forni di Sopra 2014.

5...♕g4 this move is very rare but makes a lot of sense. My recommendation for White is to continue with 6.♘gf3! Always pay attention to the move orders in the London! (The immediate 6.♗b3 doesn't bring too much 6...♗d7 7.♘gf3 c4!∞) 6...e6 7.♗b3 (7.♗a4!?N with the idea of pressuring the c6 point with ♕b5-♘e5-c4. This position reminds me of an improved version of the Cambridge Springs Variation in the Queen's Gambit with reversed colours and a tempo more) 7...♗b6?! — see Miles A.-Nogueiras J. Capablanca mem. 2000.

### 6.♘gf3!

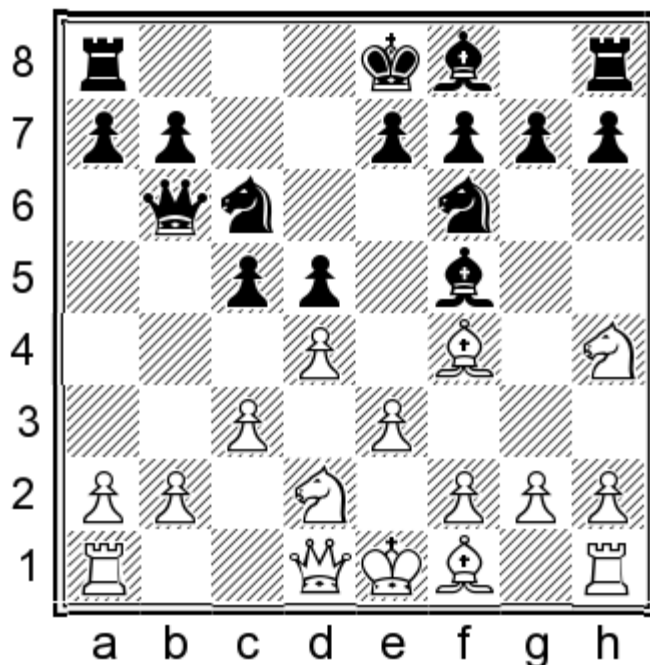
Here we see a very important move order! Our favorite 6.♗b3 here does not achieve much 6...♗d7 7.♘gf3 c4 8.♗d1 e6 9.♕e2 ♕d6 10.♕xd6 ♗xd6 11.0-0 (11.b3 b5 12.a4 b4!⇒) 11...0-0 12.♘h4 b5 13.♘xf5 exf5 and White lacks space and cannot even dream about the e4 push.

### 6...♗b6

Pressurising the b2 pawn is always questionable: will it work well or not? White always needs to have a good answer to that! Also critical is 6...e6 7.♗b3 -see the games Kamsky G.-Holt C. Las Vegas 2015. and Chernyshov K.-Seres L. Budapest 2004. (always deserving of attention is 7.♕b5!/? pressuring the c6 point after ♗a4-♘e5.)

### 7.♘h4!

This is objectively the only way to fight for an advantage. It's important to remove bishop from the diagonal and to get the c2 square for the queen. See Sedlak N.-Svetuskin D. Memorial Bora Kostic, Vrsac 2012.



An interesting try in this position which hasn't been tested enough in practice is 7.dxc5!? ♚xb2 8.♘d4 and White develops a particular initiative, but it seems that the defensive possibilities for Black are enough. 8...e5 9.♙xe5 ♙g4 10.♖b1 ♚a3 11.f3 ♘xe5 12.fxg4 ♙xc5 13.♘b5 ♚xa2 14.♗a1 ♚b2 15.♖b1 ♚a2 16.♗a1 ♚b2 17.♖b1 1/2-1/2 (17) Prie,E (2490)-Flear,G (2483) San Sebastian 2011.

**A. Delchev (2638) — R. Behling (2117)**

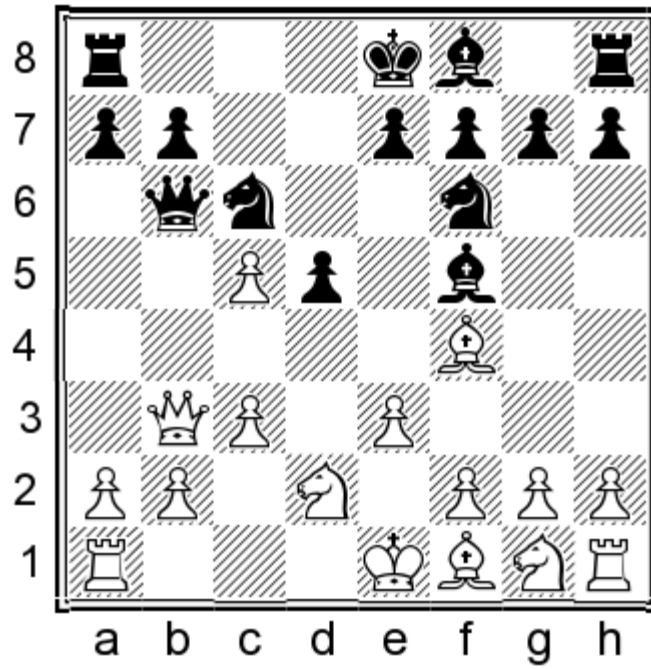
Forni di Sopra op 5th Forni di Sopra (1), 14.06.2014

This game is very instructive although there is a huge difference in knowledge and Elo between these two players. In the classical set-up with the moves ...♚b6-♚b3 inserted Black continues with 6...♙f5, threatening ...c4 with the idea of forcing an endgame, after which White reacted with the best 7.dxc5! forcing Black to take on b3 — after which White took the initiative in the endgame.

**1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘d2 ♚b6 6.♚b3 ♙f5?!**

Black's idea is to play ...c4 and force ♚b6-ab6 which leads Black to a pleasant endgame. Unfortunately for him, White has a strong answer after which Black must enter a very unpleasant endgame!

**7.dxc5!**



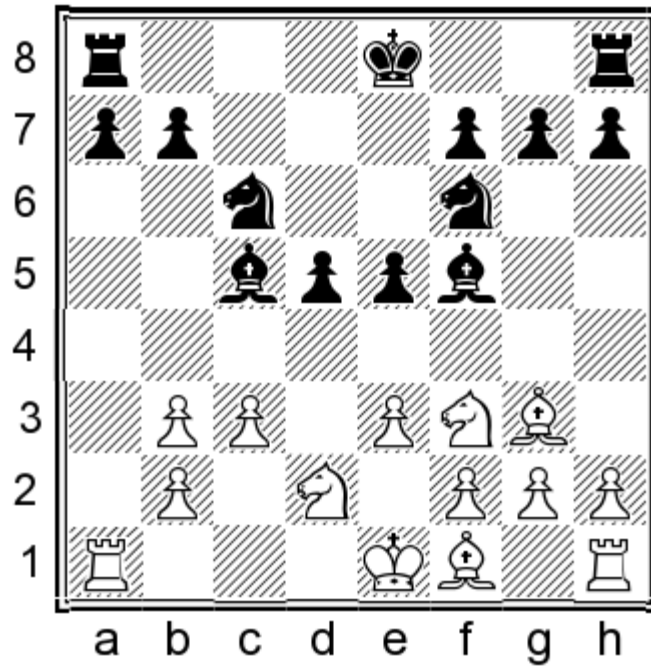
**7... ♖xb3 8.axb3!**

An important move! Only in this way can White keep an advantage! With the further b4, and maybe at some point b5, White will attack Black's center. It would appear that White will use the a-file in his actions. With 8. ♖xb3?! White cannot save the c5 pawn after which Black can achieve a comfortable position. 8...e5 9. ♖g3 a5! 10. ♗f3 (10.a4 ♖c2 11. ♗d2 ♗d7 12. ♗gf3 f6) 10...a4 11. ♗bd2 ♗d7 12. ♖b5 f6 13.0-0 ♖xc5=

**8...e5 9. ♖g3 ♖xc5**

On first sight Black's position looks nice thanks to the center, but that center is actually fragile and White can undermine it.

**10. ♗gf3±**



The correct move order! Otherwise Black equalizes easily, for example 10.b4?! ♕d6 11.♖gf3 ♗h5! 12.b5 ♗xg3 13.hxg3 ♗e7=

### 10...♗d7

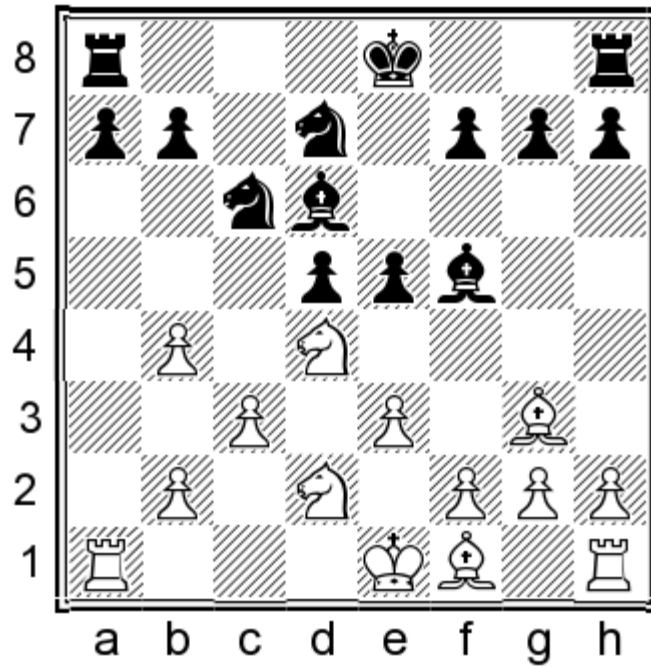
The most logical move with the idea to firm up the center after ...f6! If 10...e4 11.♗d4 ♗xd4 12.exd4 ♕b6 13.♕e2 0-0 14.♗f1 ♕e6 15.♗e3± and White's pawns on the queenside are more mobile.

10...♕d6 11.♕b5 ♗d7 12.♗d4! exd4 13.♕xd6 dxe3 14.fxe3± the bishop on d6 is a nightmare for Black.

10...d4 11.b4 dxe3 12.fxe3± Kovacevic,S (2435)-Garcia,G (2520) Mislata 1993 12...♕xe3? 13.♗c4+— with no defence against ♗e3 or ♗d6!

### 11.b4 ♕d6 12.♕b5

This move is very logical and in the spirit of the position. 12.♗d4! also looks convincing

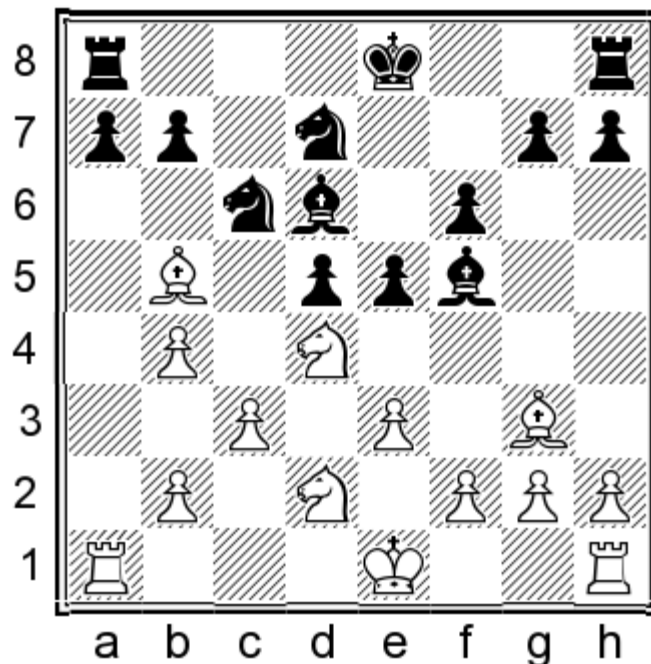


12...f6?! (12...exd4 13. f6 dxe3 14. fxe3 f6 15. e2 e7 16. 0-0) 13. exd4 f6 (13...0-0 14. f6 b5 15. 0-0 b6 16. f3 a6 17. e2 e8 18. dxe5 fxe5 19. d1 g6 20. e1 c4 21. a4! b5 22. b3 e4 23. d4±; 13...e7 14. dxe5 e5 15. b3±) 14. e2 e7 15. dxe5 fxe5 16. 0-0± Black's king is not safe, nor is the center.

### 12...f6?!

Black strengthens the center and decides to keep his king in the center. Sometimes even in endgames, the king can be unsafe in the center, however, so better was 12...0-0 13. 0-0 a6 14. a4 e8 15. b3 f6 (15...b6?! 16. e4! dxe4 17. g5 g6 18. gxe4 ad8 19. f3 e7 20. fd1± with the idea of f1-e3. White's pieces are much better placed.) 16. h4 e4 17. xf6 gxf6 18. h4 e6±

### 13. d4!



Without this move Black would be fine, but very often you need just one tempo stand well!

### 13...♟xd4

13...exd4 14.♞xd6 dxc3 (14...dxe3 15.fxe3 ♔f7 16.0-0±) 15.bxc3 ♔f7 16.♞xc6 bxc6 17.♟b3 ♞d3 18.♟d4 ♞hc8 19.♔d2 ♞c4 20.♞a5±

### 14.exd4 ♔e7

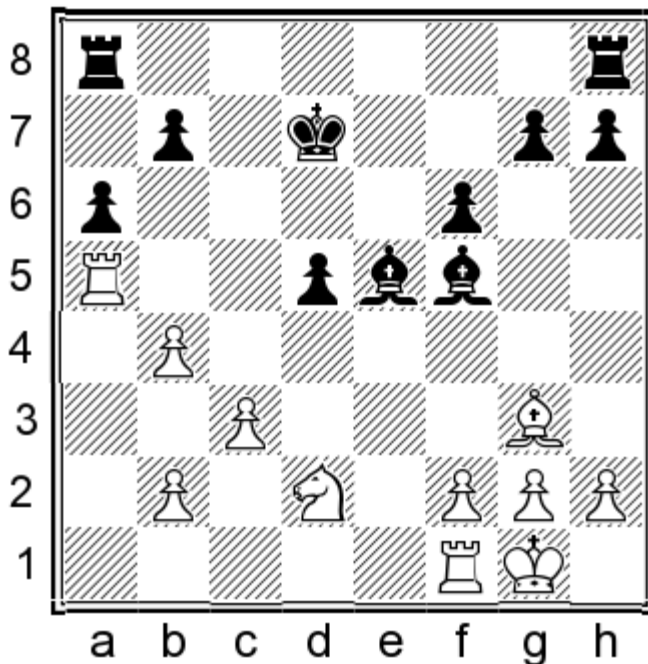
Defends the bishop with the idea of exd4.

### 15.dxe5 ♞xe5

15...♟xe5 16.♟b3 a6 17.♞e2±

Black would make just a short-lived central demonstration after 15...fxe5 16.♟f3 ♔f6 (16...e4 17.♟d4±) 17.♞xd7 ♞xd7 18.0-0-0 ♞e6 19.♞he1 e4 20.♞xd6 exf3 21.♞d3!+- with ♞f3! next.

### 16.0-0 a6 17.♞xd7 ♔xd7 18.♞a5?!



Giving unnecessary chances to Black. A safer way to a big advantage was 18.♟f3! ♞he8 19.♞fd1 ♔c6 20.♞a5! b5 21.♞e1 ♞xg3 (21...♞e4 22.♟xe5+ fxe5 23.f3 ♞d3 24.♞xe5±) 22.♞xe8 ♞xe8 23.hxg3 ♞c8 24.♟d4+ ♔d6 25.♞a1± Black has two weaknesses — the pawns on d5 and a6 — and it must be enough for a win.

### 18...♔c6?

Black misses a golden opportunity to save the game: 18...b6! 19.♞xd5+ ♔e6 20.c4 (20.♞xe5+ fxe5 21.♞e1 ♞hc8 22.♞xe5 ♔f7∞) 20...♞hd8 21.♞xe5 fxe5 22.♞c1 ♞xd5 23.cxd5+ ♔xd5 24.♟c4 ♞b8 25.♟e3+ ♔e6 26.♞c7±

### 19.♞c5+ ♔b6

19...♔d6 20.f4+-

## 20.f4!

Black resigned in view of ♖d5 or ♕f2!

1-0

### Lessons to be learned:

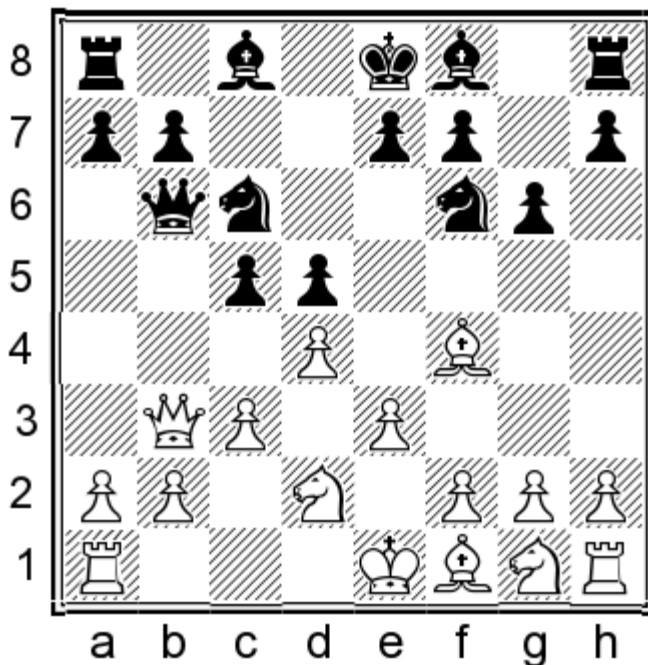
1. Positions in classical set-ups with the moves ♖b6-♖b3 inserted are always tricky and you always have to pay attention to not enter into a bad endgame! In this game, White's reaction with 7.dxc5! was very important!
2. Always, after entering the endgame when Black takes on b3, White has to react with axb3! Massive pawns on the queenside and the a-file gives White many good options!

**N. Sedlak — R. Miranovic**

Ch Croatia Osijek (Croatia) (8), 18.10.2008

In comparison with the previous game, again in a classical set-up, this time my opponent chose 6...g6!? with the idea of playing ...c4, and after ♖c2, winning a tempo with ...♕f5! I decided to go into the endgame after 7.♖b6 with ♕c7 next, hoping for better chances thanks to my superior pawn structure. The critical moment in the opening was 8...♘d7?! which brought Black a passive position! Instead of this, Black had an interesting possibility of sacrificing the pawn and playing for activity. These kinds of decisions are always hard, especially if you haven't checked it before.

1.d4 d5 2.♕f4 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘d2 ♖b6 6.♖b3 g6!?

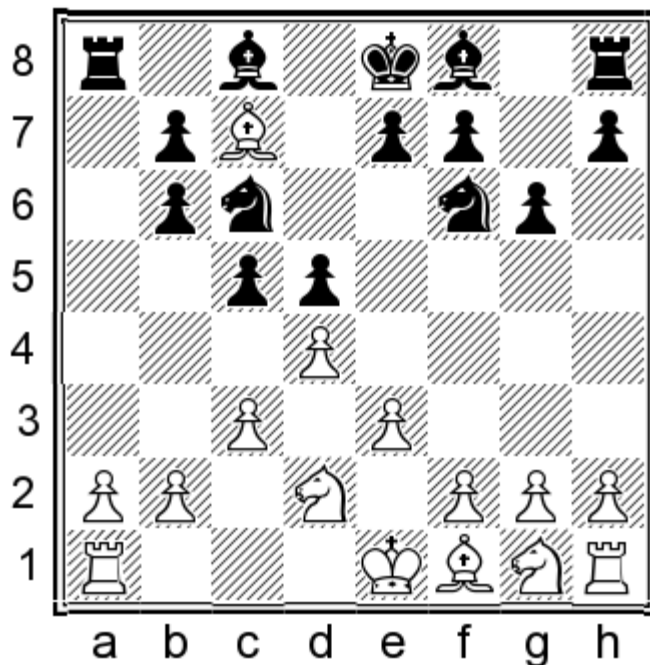


The idea of this move, as stated, is to play ...c4 and after ♖c2 to take a tempo with ...♕f5!

7.♖xb6

What else? Otherwise Black is fine! 7.♘gf3 c4 8.♖xb6 (8. ♖c2 ♕f5 9. ♖c1 ♘h5) 8...axb6 9.a3 b5 10.♖c1 ♕g7= or 7.dxc5 ♖xc5 8.♘gf3 ♕g7 9.h3 0-0 10.♕e2 ♖e8=

7...axb6 8.♔c7!



Only with this strong move can White fight for an advantage.

8...♗d7?!

This natural human move paralyzes his own pieces. Black could play much more actively by preparing ...e5 at all costs. 8...cxd4! 9.exd4 ♔g7 10.♗gf3 ♕f5 11.♔xb6 0-0 12.♔c7 ♖fc8 13.♔f4 ♗d7 14.♔e2 (14.♔b5 e5 15.♔xc6 ♖xc6 16.♗xe5 (16.dxe5 ♗c5 17.0-0 ♗d3 18.♔e3 ♗xb2 19.♗d4 ♖xc3 20.♗xf5 gxf5 21.♔d4 ♖d3 22.♗b3 ♗c4?) 16...♗xe5 17.dxe5 (17.♔xe5 ♔h6!) 17...♖b6 18.b3 f6) 14...e5! (14...♗b6 15.a3 ♗a4 16.♖a2±) 15.dxe5 ♗dxe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♔xe5 (17.0-0 ♗d3 18.♔xd3 ♔xd3 19.♖fd1 d4) 17...♔xe5 18.♗f3 ♔f6 19.0-0 d4! 20.♗xd4 ♔xd4 21.cxd4 ♖c2 22.♔f3 ♖xb2 with a drawish position.

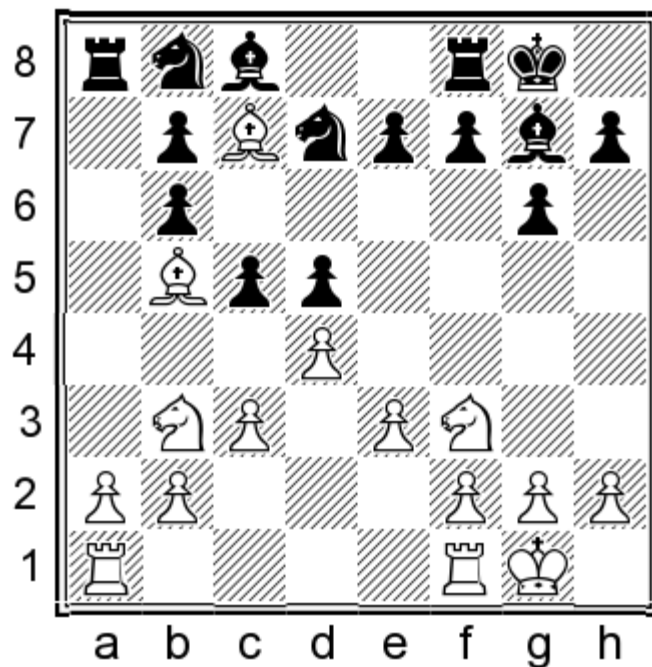
9.♔b5!±

The best place for the bishop! It prevents ...e5 and fixes the b6 pawn!

9...♔g7 10.♗gf3 0-0 11.0-0 ♗cb8

The white bishop on c7 is very unpleasant and black tries to eliminate him with ♗a6. In praxis there has also been another try from Black 11...e6 12.a4 ♔f6 with the idea of removing the white bishop from c7. 13.♖fc1 ♔d8 14.♔d6 ♔e7 15.♔c7 ♔d8 16.♔g3 ♔f6 17.♗b3! c4 18.♗bd2 ♖e8 19.b3! cxb3 20.♗xb3 ♗f8 21.c4 dxc4 22.♗bd2! c3 23.♗c4± Bogosavljevic,B (2550)-Rabrenovic,V (2393) Valjevo 2011

12.♗b3!



With the plan being to force Black's reaction in the center!

### 12...cxd4

This looks horrible, but other continuations don't promise a bright future for Black either. For example: 12...c4 13.♖bd2 ♗a6 14.♙g3 ♜f6 15.h3! it's very important to keep the dark-squared bishop which causes troubles for black. 15...♙d7 16.a4±; 12...♗a6 13.♙xd7 ♜xc7 (13...♙xd7 14.♙xb6 c4 15.♜c5 ♜xc5 16.♙xc5±) 14.♙xc8 ♜xc8 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♜xc5 ♜b5 17.♜d3±

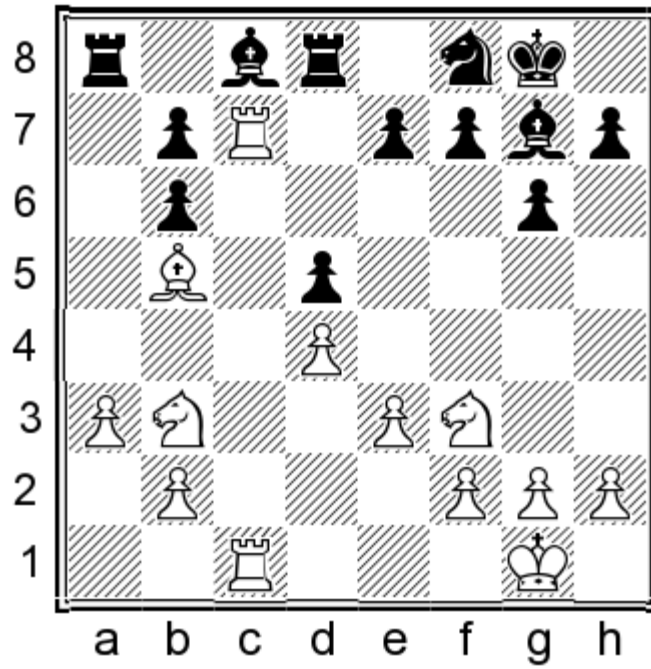
### 13.cxd4 ♗a6 14.♜fc1!

It was not necessary to retreat the bishop! Occupation of the c-file and eventually bringing the rook to c7 is more important than saving a bishop.

### 14...♜xc7 15.♜xc7 ♜d8 16.♜ac1 ♜f8?

Maybe this move was based on a faulty calculation. Black could play 16...♙f6 17.a3 ♜f8 with transposition to the game but without giving up the e7 pawn.

### 17.a3?!



A very safe and slow move. Better was 17. ♖xe7! but it looked to be taking an unnecessary risk. 17... ♗d7 (17... ♖xa2 18. ♕e8! ♕e6 19. ♖cc7 ♖xb2 20. ♗bd2 ♖a8 21. g3 ♕h3 22. ♕xf7+ ♗h8 23. ♖c1+-) 18. ♖xc8 ♖axc8 19. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 20. ♕xd7 ♖c2 21. ♗e1 ♖xb2 22. ♗c1 ♖b1 23. ♗cd3 ♖a1 24. ♕c8 ♖xa2 25. ♕xb7+-

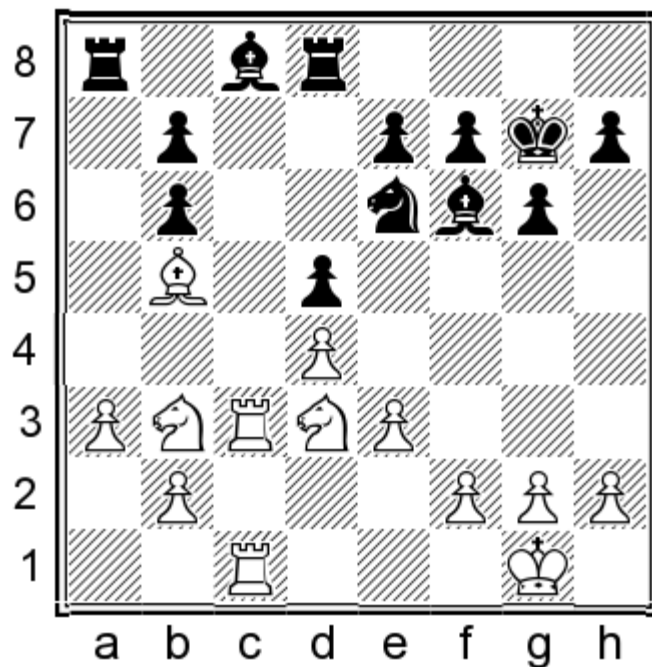
**17... ♕f6 18. ♗e5 ♗e6 19. ♖7c3**

Black manages to expel the rook from 7th rank and it looks like he has some air.

**19... ♗g7?**

A move into space! The bishop on f6 is not useful and it was the right time to exchange him. 19... ♕xe5! 20. dxe5 ♕d7 21. ♕xd7 ♖xd7 22. f4± Control of the c-file and a better structure guarantee a long term advantage to White, but the position is playable for Black

**20. ♗d3!**



Of course, White has to avoid simplifications. The knight is much better than the bishop!

**20...♙d7 21.♙xd7 ♖xd7 22.f4**

Taking space is always good if you don't have any better option.

**22...h5 23.♖f2 ♗h6 24.♖e2**

Avoiding any counterplay! 24.♘d2? ♘xd4! 25.exd4 ♙xd4+ 26.♖e2 ♙xc3 27.♖xc3 f6↗

**24...♖ad8 25.♘d2**

The knight deserves a better place than b3!

**25...♖a8 26.♘f3 ♗g7 27.g3**

This is always necessary before h3! After 27.h3?! Black prevents White's plan with 27...h4!

**27...♖d6 28.h3 ♖a4 29.♘b4 ♖a8**

Black is forced to play passively because his pieces are limited, while White can slowly improve his position by grabbing more space!

**30.♖c8**

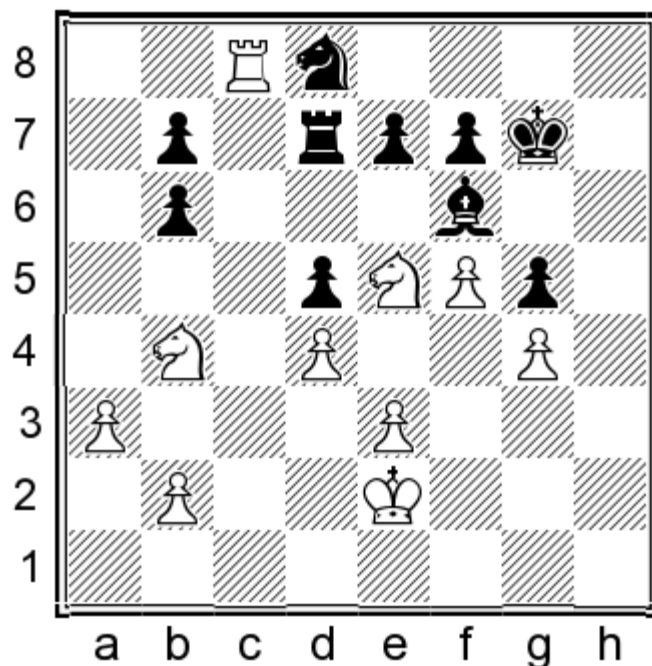
Entering the 8th rank is always good idea.

**30...♖xc8 31.♖xc8 ♖d7 32.g4 hxg4 33.hxg4**

Black is slowly losing squares for his pieces!

**33...g5 34.f5 ♘d8 35.♘e5!+-**

Everything is ready for the denouement!



**35...♞d6**

35...♞xe5 36.dxe5 d4 37.e4!+- Black is almost in zugzwang and the pawn on d4 will fall soon or later.

**36.♞c7**

Now the 7th rank is more important!

**36...e6 37.♔f3 ♔g8 38.♖bd3**

The knight has finished one job and now his help is necessary again!

**38...♔g7**

38...♞xe5 39.♗xe5 exf5 40.gxf5 ♔g7 41.♔g4 ♔f6 42.a4 zugzwang 42...♔g7 43.♔xg5+-

**39.fxe6 ♞xe6 40.♞d7**

Finally one of the pawns falls!

**40...♗c6 41.♞xf7+**

Conclusion: In positions with the inserted moves ♞b6-♞b3, occasionally it is possible to take on b6, but only in some concrete situations. In this case the main reason for entering the endgame was because of White's move ♞c7 causing a lack of co-ordination between Black's pieces!

**1-0**

Compared with previous games, in this game Anthony Miles met a rare reaction from Black in 5...♔g4. With enterprising play, he showed the big downside of the seemingly active bishop on g4. For the umpteenth time, Anthony Miles showed his great feel for the London System and endgames which arises out of it.

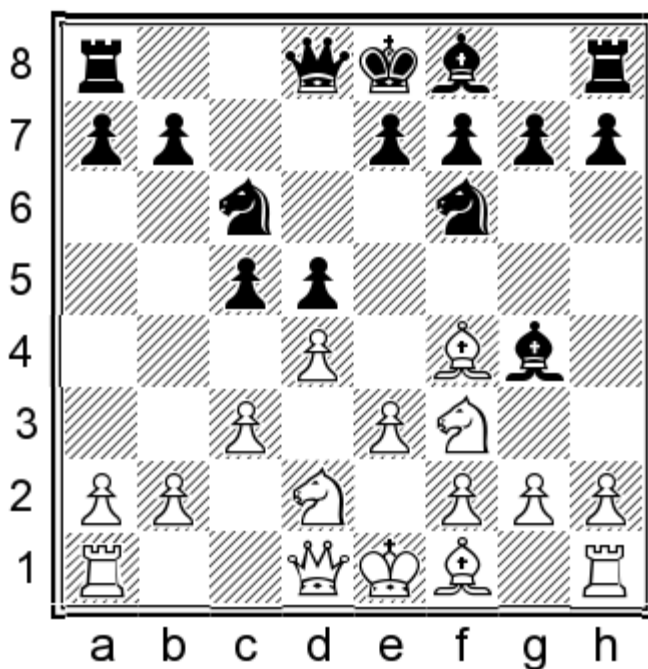
### 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3

Our move order is 2.♕f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♘d2 ♕g4?! 6.♘gf3 e6 7.♚b3

### 2...♘f6 3.♕f4 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♕g4

It would appear that this is not a safe place for the bishop after a further ♘e5.

### 6.♘bd2



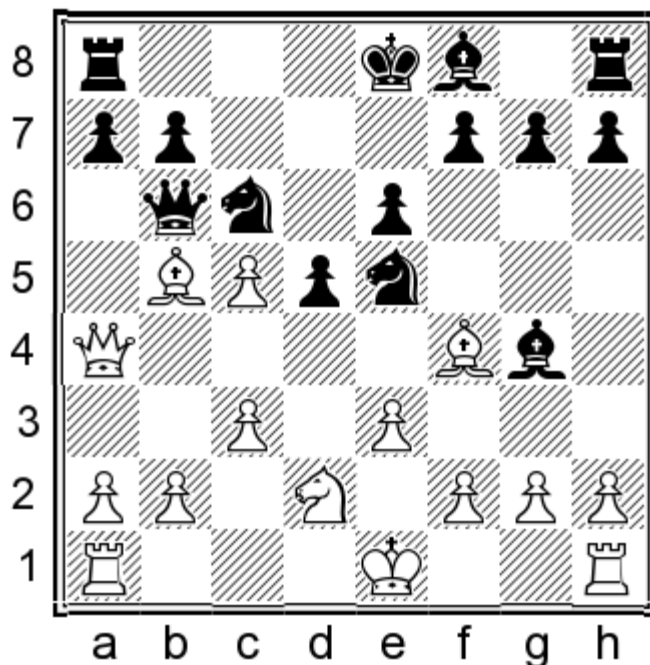
Actually, from this moment the game starts to be of interest to us.

### 6...e6

6...cxd4 transposes to the Carlsbad structure which we covered in CHAPTER 1. 7.exd4 ♚b6 (7...e6 8.♚b3 ♚c8 9.♕d3 - transposition to CHAPTER) 8.♚b3!

### 7.♚b3

The most common reaction in the London System is pressuring the b7 pawn! A very interesting alternative is 7.♚a4!? with the idea of treating the position in Cambridge-Springs spirit by creating pressure on the c6 square 7...♘d7 8.♕b5 ♚b6 (8... ♚c8?! 9. ♕xc6 ♚xc6 10. ♚xa7; 8... ♚c8!? 9.0-0 with the plan c4!) 9.♘e5 ♘dx5 10.dxc5!



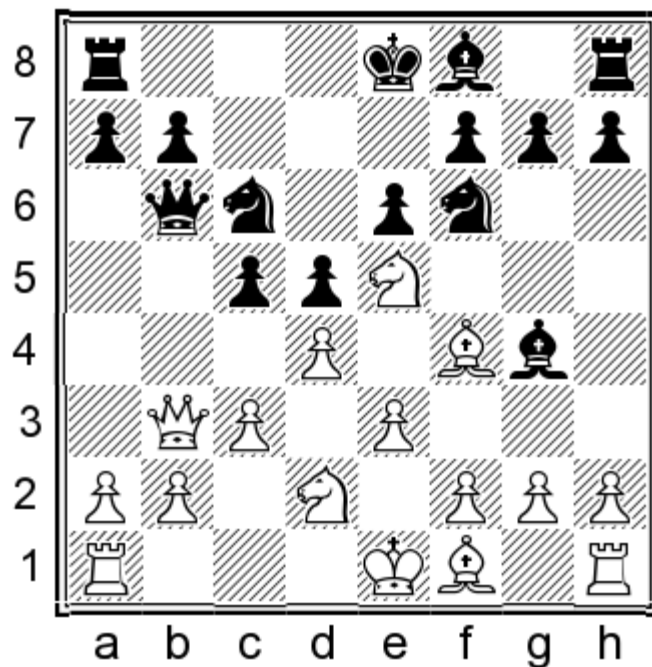
With this intermediate move, White seizes the initiative, especially thanks to the uncertain bishop on g4! (Very slow is 10. ♕xe5?! a6! 11. ♕xc6+ ♖xc6 12. ♗xc6+ bxc6=) 10... ♖d3+! This is the only good answer for Black. With other moves Black walks into tempo gains. (10... ♕xc5? 11. ♕xe5 ♕f5 12.g4 ♕g6 13. ♕xg7 ♖g8 14. ♕d4±; 10... ♗xc5? 11. ♕xe5 ♕h5 12. ♖b3 ♗b6 13. ♕d4 ♗c7 14. ♖a5 ♖c8 15.c4 a6 16. ♕xc6+ bxc6 17.cxd5 exd5 18. ♖c1+→) 11. ♕xd3 ♗xb2 again the only principled response! (11... ♕xc5?! 12.b4 ♕e7 13.b5 ♗a5 14. ♗c2 ♖b8 15.e4) 12. ♖b1 ♗xc3 13. ♕b5! other attractive-looking moves don't offer much for White! (13. ♕a6 ♗a5!; 13.0-0! ♕xc5 14. ♖xb7 0-0!↗) 13... ♖c8□ (13... ♗xc5 14.0-0! ♖c8 15. ♕e5 ♕f5 16. ♕xc6+ ♗xc6 17. ♖fc1! ♗xa4 18. ♖xc8+ ♖d7 19. ♖c7+ ♖e8 20. ♖xb7 ♗h4□ 21. ♖c8+ ♗d8 22. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23. ♖xf7±) 14.0-0→ and White has strong attack!

It shows in the following variations. For example: 14... ♗xd2 (14... ♕e7 15. ♖b3 0-0 16. ♕xc6 bxc6 17. ♕d6! ♕xd6 18.cxd6 ♕f5 19. ♖bc1±; 14... ♕xc5 15. ♖b3 ♕e7 16. ♗xa7 0-0 17. ♗xb7±) 15. ♕xc6+ bxc6 16. ♖b8! ♖xb8 17. ♗xc6+ ♖e7 18. ♗c7+ ♖f6 19. ♗e5+ ♖e7 20. ♗xb8+→

### 7... ♗b6?!

A natural reaction, seen many times before, but in this specific position it is not good! Black didn't evaluate the endgame which will occur very well! Another and better option for Black was 7... ♗c8 8. ♖e5! ♖xe5 (8... ♕e7 9. ♕b5 0-0 10. ♕xc6 bxc6 11. ♗a4 cxd4 12. ♖xc6 ♗d7 13. ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 14. ♗xd4± 1/2-1/2 Abel, L-Boensch,U/Szekszard 1989/ (39)) 9. ♕xe5 ♖d7 10. ♗a4!±

### 8. ♖e5



White didn't want to hurry with the endgame! An advantage was also promised by 8. ♖xb6!? axb6 9. ♗e5 ♗xe5 (9... ♜c8 10.f3 ♗f5 11.g4 ♗g6 12.h4 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♗d7 14.h5 ♗c2 15. ♗b5±) 10.dxe5 ♗d7 11. ♗b5 ♗e7 12.e4 0-0-0 13.0-0 ♗b8±

### 8... ♗xe5

The typical 8...c4?! doesn't work well here because White implements e4 easily. 9. ♖xb6 axb6 10. ♗xg4 ♗xg4 11.e4! b5 12.exd5 exd5 13. ♗e2 ♗f6 14.0-0 ♗e7 15. ♗f3 0-0 16. ♜fe1 b4 17. ♗f1 bxc3 18.bxc3 b5 19. ♗e3 ♜fd8 20. ♗e5!±

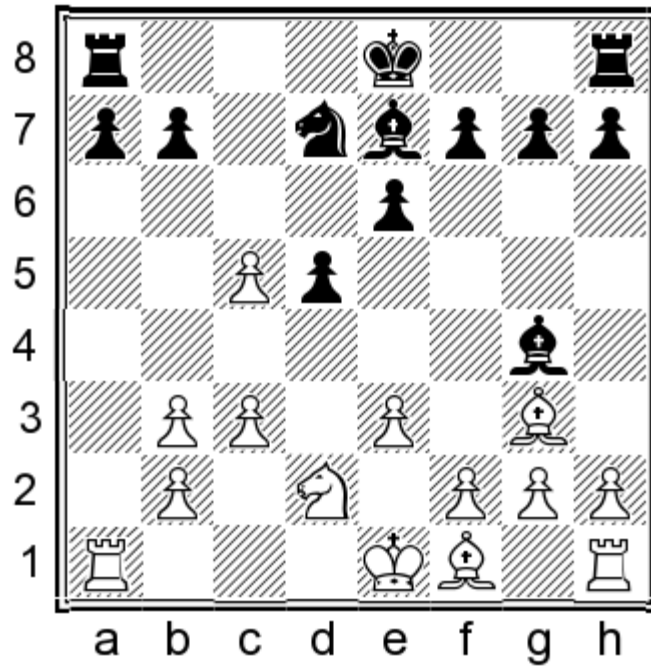
### 9. ♗xe5 ♖xb3

Black was more-or-less forced into on this decision to head for a slightly worse endgame! 9...c4 10. ♖a4+ ♗d7 11.b3 cxb3 12.axb3±

### 10.axb3±

The a-file and doubled b-pawns promise a space advantage and initiative on the queenside for White!

### 10... ♗d7 11. ♗g3 ♗e7 12.dxc5!



Only with this active approach can White use his pluses on the queenside. Now the b-pawns become mobile!

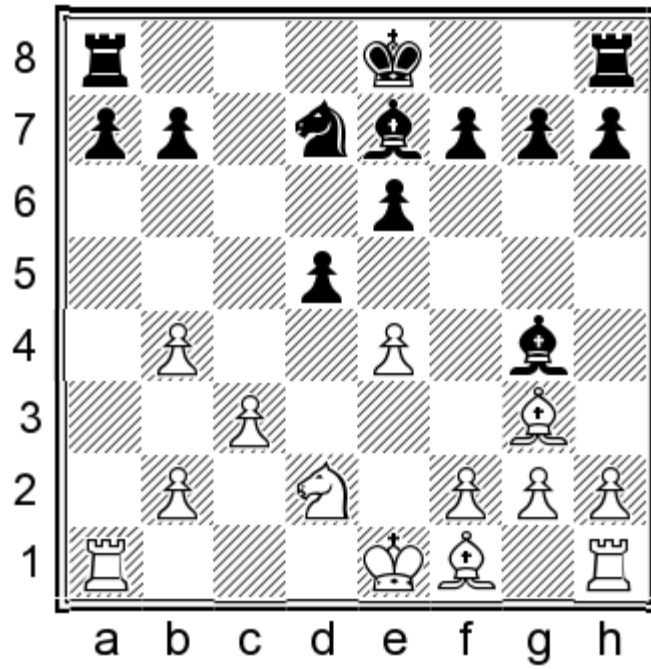
**12...♙xc5**

Moving the same piece two times in a row doesn't look great, but Black doesn't have a better solution. For example:  
 12...♜xc5?! develops White's pieces with tempo 13.♙b5+ ♜d7 14.e4! a6 15.f3 ♙h5 16.exd5 exd5 17.0-0 ♜d8 18.♞fe1!  
 ♜f8 19.♙f1 ♜c5 20.b4 ♜e6 21.♜b3±

**13.b4 ♙e7**

13...♙b6 essentially does not change much compared with the game! 14.e4! 0-0 (14...d4 15.f3 ♙h5 16.♙b5 a6  
 17.♜c4±) 15.♙b5 ♞fd8 16.f3 ♙h5 17.exd5 exd5 18.♜b3 ♞e8+ 19.♜d2 ♙e3+ 20.♜d1±

**14.e4!**



White continues his concrete plan of pressuring the center!

#### 14...0-0

Black didnt have a better choice than playing with an isolated pawn. 14...dxe4 15.♘xe4 0-0 16.♙d6! ♙xd6 17.♘xd6 b6 18.♙b5± or 14...d4 15.♘c4 dxc3 16.bxc3 0-0 17.♙d6! ♙xd6 18.♘xd6±

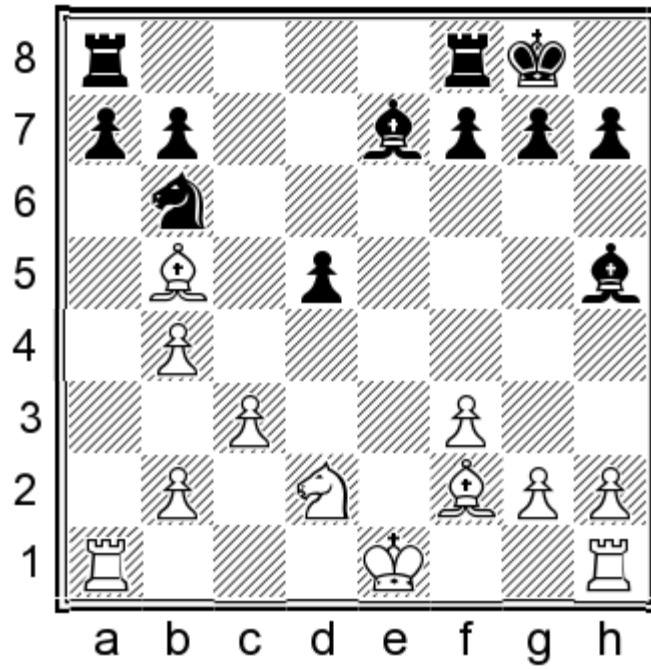
#### 15.f3!

White makes space for the bishop on f2 and subsequent better control of the d4 square!

#### 15...♙h5 16.exd5 exd5 17.♙b5±

In the endgame, the isolated pawn is much weaker than with queens on the board. Black will not be able to free himself from the d-pawn responsibilities with ...d4 because White controls that square very well!

#### 17...♘b6 18.♙f2

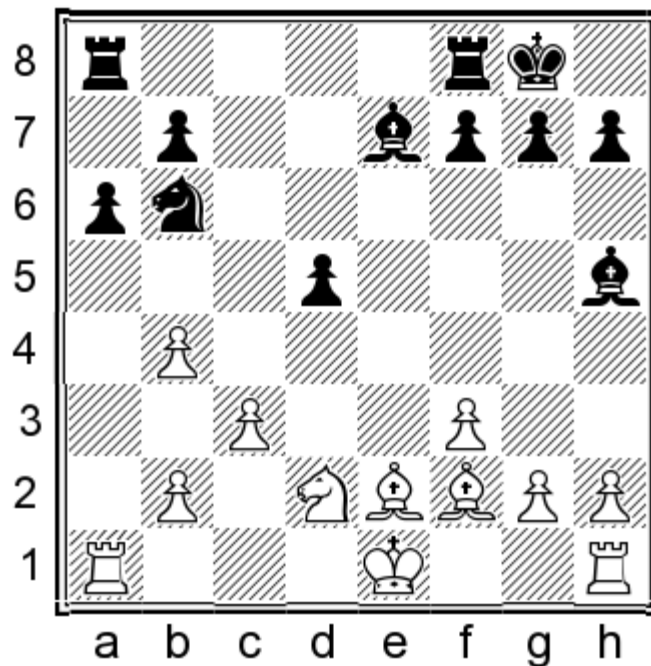


White continues the logical idea to prevent d4! It was possible to also play 18.0-0 because 18...d4 was not a real threat (18...a6 19.♙f2 axb5 20.♙xb6 ♗g6 21.♞b3±) 19.♞fe1! ♗g5 20.♞e4 ♗e3+ 21.♙f2 ♙xf2+ 22.♚xf2 dxc3 23.bxc3 ♗g6 24.♞c5±

### 18...a6

With the seemingly more active 18...♗g5 Black isn't able to solve his problems either after 19.♞b3 ♞c4 20.0-0 ♞xb2 (20...a6 21.♙xc4 dxc4 22.♞c5±) 21.♞xa7 ♞xa7 22.♙xa7 ♗g6 23.♙d4± and White's pieces are much better placed. The plan is ♞a1 or f4-f5.

### 19.♙e2



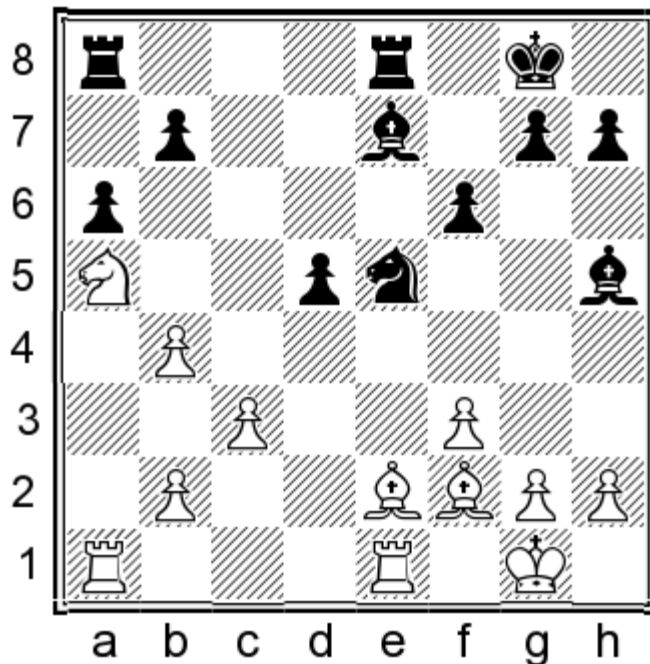
White chose to continue the game with the bishop pair. Interesting was 19.♙xb6 axb5 20.♚f2± with domination of the

dark-squares!

19...♞d7 20.0-0 ♜fe8 21.♞fe1 f6

With this move Black secures a place for the knight on e5 and for the bishop on f7.

22.♞b3 ♞e5 23.♞a5!



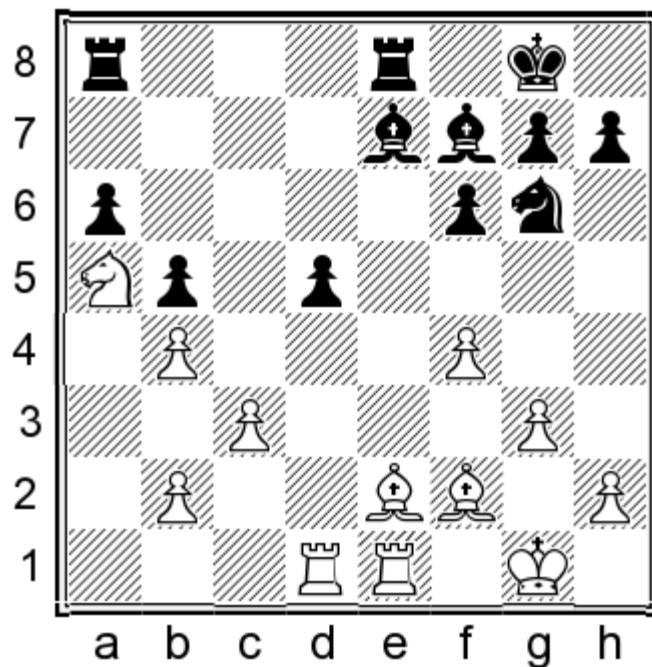
At the moment, White is not interested in the d4 square. First he provokes new weaknesses on the queenside!

23...b5 24.♞ad1 ♞f7 25.f4!

Concrete play in the endgame instead of thematic play is often more effective. By putting the bishop to f3 White resolves the game.

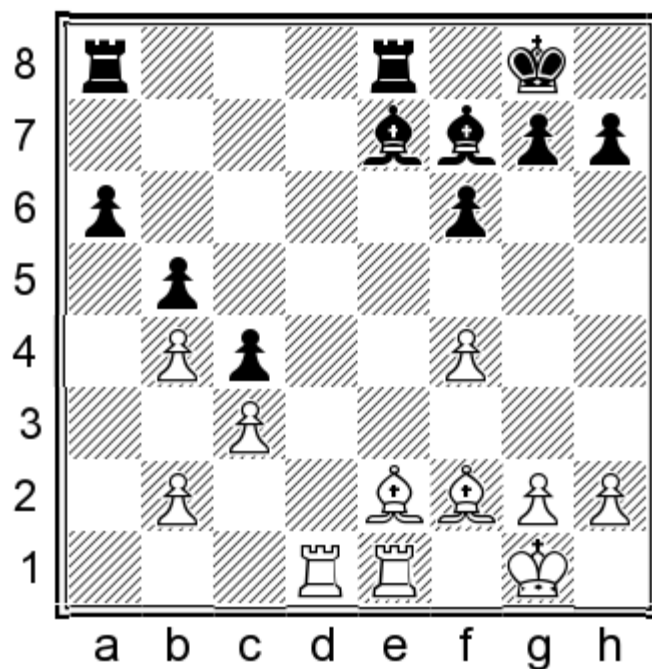
25...♞c4

25...♞g6 26.g3



26...♔d6 27.♕f3 ♖xe1+ 28.♞xe1±

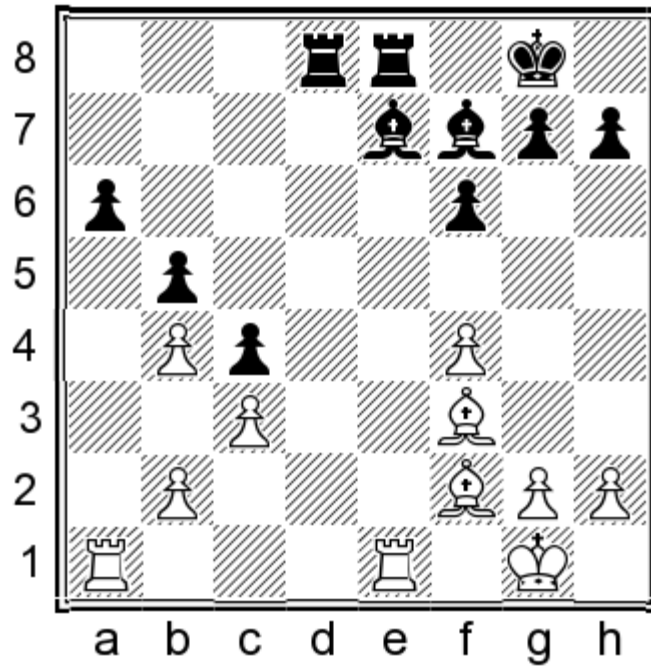
26.♘xc4 dxc4



Black has rid himself of the weakness on d5, but a6 is still here! 26...bxc4 27.♕f3 ♖ad8 28.♞a1 ♜d6 29.♞xe7 ♞xe7 30.♕c5 ♞ed7 31.♕xd6 ♞xd6 32.b5+-

27.♕f3+- ♖ad8 28.♞a1!

The pawn on a6 is doomed!



**28...♔f8**

Somehow Black must give up the a6 pawn! 28...♔d6 29.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 30.g3 ♔c7 31.♖xa6+— or 28...♖d6 29.♔c5 ♖d7 30.♔xe7 ♖dx7 31.♖xe7 ♖xe7 32.♖xa6+

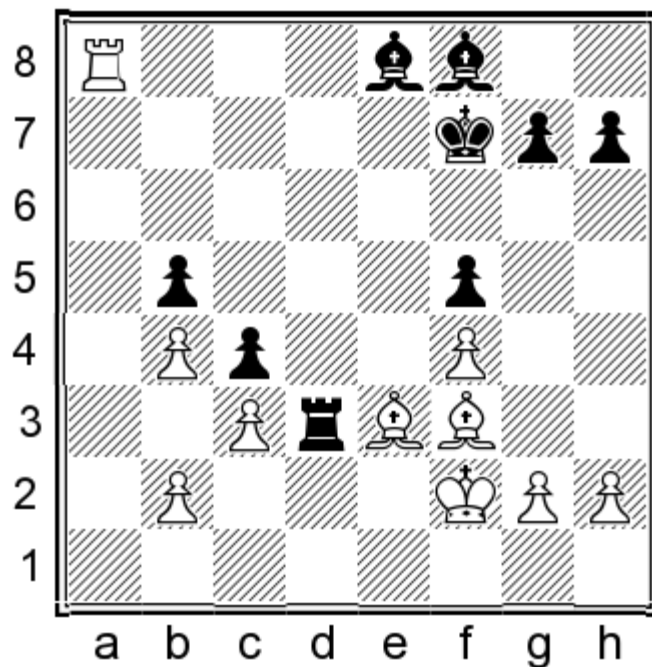
**29.♖xe8 ♔xe8 30.♖xa6 ♖d2 31.♖a8**

The b2 pawn is indirectly protected. Black must take care with his bishops!

**31...♔f7 32.♔e3 ♖d3**

32...♖xb2 33.♔d5+ ♔e7 34.♔c5+

**33.♔f2 f5**



The winning plan is now clear: to exchange rooks and dark-squared bishops!

34. ♖c5! ♙e7

34... ♙xc5+ 35. bxc5 ♜d2+ 36. ♔e3 ♜xb2 37. c6+—

35. ♜a7 ♜d7 36. ♜xd7 ♙xd7 37. ♙d5+ ♗f6 38. ♙xe7+ ♗xe7 39. ♗e3 ♗d6 40. ♗d4

I guess, Black lost on time here, but in any event the endgame is hopeless for him! 40. ♗d4 h6 41. h4 ♙e8 42. b3 cxb3 43. ♙xb3 ♙c6 44. g3 ♙e8 45. ♙c2 ♙d7 46. ♙d3 g6 47. c4 bxc4 48. ♙xc4 ♙e8 49. b5+—

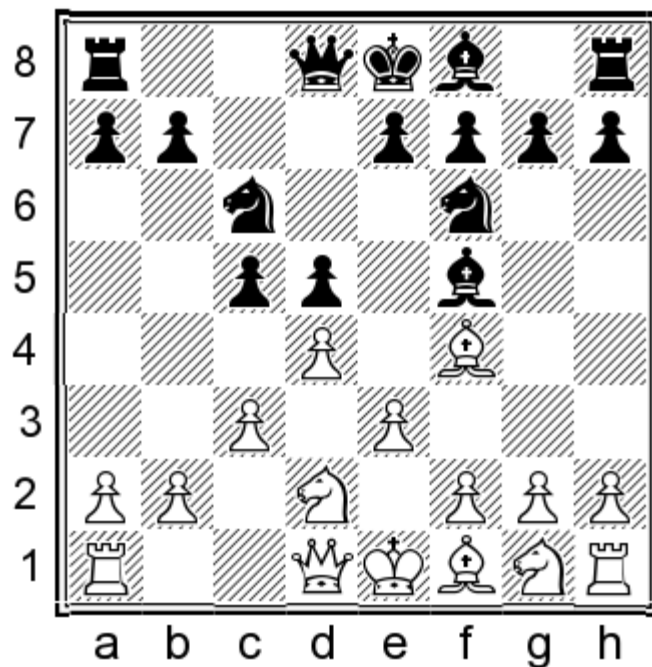
1–0

**K. Chernyshov (2556) — L. Seres (2497)**

Budapest FS05 GM Budapest (4), 04.05.2004

Here comes one of the critical variations. In the classical set-up without ♖b3-♖b6 inserted, Black first develops his bishop on f5. The main question: is it too slow? Can White achieve anything with the ♖b3 move or with the plan ♗gf3-♙b5-♗a4-♗e5, exploiting the absence of Black's white-squared bishop?

1. d4 d5 2. ♙f4 c5 3. e3 ♗c6 4. c3 ♗f6 5. ♗d2 ♙f5



The most natural and healthy move!

### 6. ♘gf3!

A very important move! Move orders are of crucial importance in the “London System”. Typically 6. ♖b3 is not the best in this position because this move allows 6... ♕d7! without any negative effects for Black! 7. ♘gf3 c4 8. ♖d1 e6=

### 6...e6

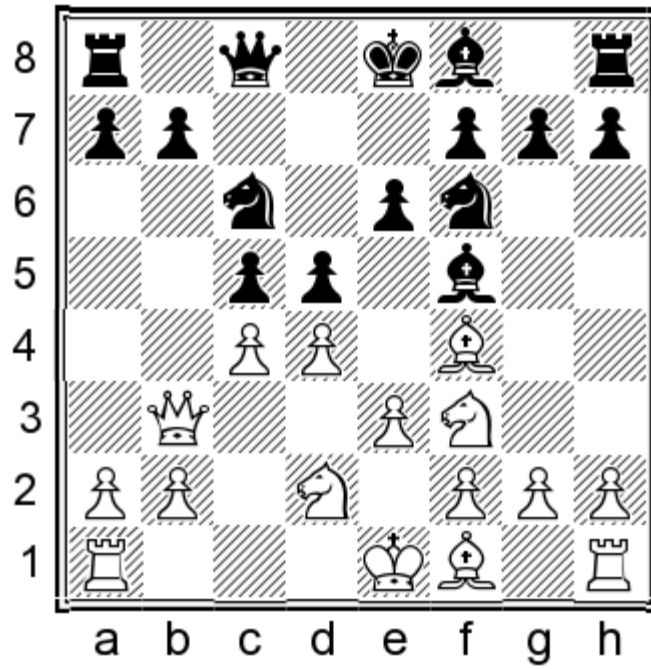
Or 6... ♖b6 which we will see in future games. After 6...cxd4 7.exd4 e6 8. ♖b3 ♖c8 9. ♘h4 — position is transposing to the CHAPTER

### 7. ♖b3 ♖c8!

The only good choice for Black! 7... ♕d7?! — see the next game.

7... ♖b6 8. ♖xb6 axb6 9. ♗b5 ♘d7 10. ♘e5! ♘dx5 11. ♗xe5± Mitkov N.-Pitirojtirahton Dresden ol 2008.

### 8.c4!?



This game is interesting, showing another way for White: changing the pawn structure in the center and opening the position. The facts that support such a decision are the vulnerable position of Black's queen on c8 and the absence of the ♕f5 from the queenside. Another logical continuation is 8. ♖h4!? ♙e4 9. f3 (9. ♙g5!? ♙e7 10. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 11. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 12. ♙b5+ ♖f8 13. ♚d1±) 9... ♙g6 10. ♗xg6 hxg6 11. g4 ♙e7 12. ♙g2 a6 13. ♙g3 b5∞ Sapis, W (2401)-Korneev, O (2566) Cappelle-la-Grande 2004

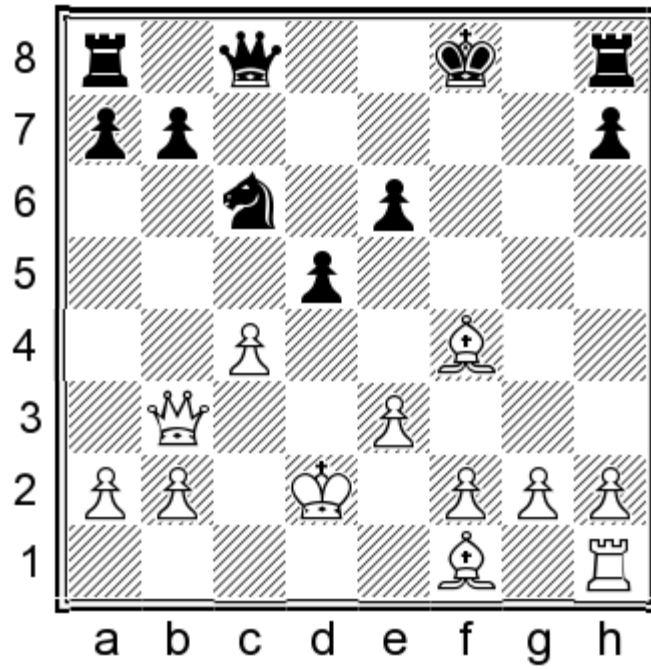
### 8...cxd4 9. ♗xd4 ♙b4?!

Too ambitious. Trying to take over the initiative, Black ruins his own pawn structure. The correct reaction is 9...dxc4! 10. ♙xc4 (10. ♚xc4 ♗xd4 11. ♚xd4 ♚c6 12. ♚c4 ♗d5! A strong initiative-seeking move with the idea of ...♗b4! 13. ♚xc6+ bxc6 14. ♙g3 ♗b4 15. ♖c1 ♗xa2 16. ♖xc6 ♙b4 17. ♙c4 ♖d8 18. 0-0 ♖xd2 19. ♖c8+ ♖d8 20. ♖c7 0-0 21. ♙xa2=) 10... ♗xd4 11. exd4 a6 12. 0-0 ♙e7 13. ♙e2! ♗d5 14. ♙e5 0-0 15. ♗c4 b5 (15... ♚d7!? 16. ♙g3 b5 17. ♗e5 ♚b7 18. ♙f3∞) 16. ♗d6 ♙xd6 17. ♙xd6 ♖d8 18. ♙c5 with the idea of ♗e5-♙f3 and typical play for this type of position. White has two bishops and some prospects on the queenside with an a4 push.

9... ♗xd4 10. exd4 dxc4 11. ♗xc4±

### 10. ♗xf5 exf5

Attractive-looking is 10... ♗e4 but White has a strong answer 11. ♗xg7+ ♖f8 12. ♗xe6+! fxe6 13. ♖d1 ♗xd2 14. ♖xd2 ♙xd2+ 15. ♖xd2

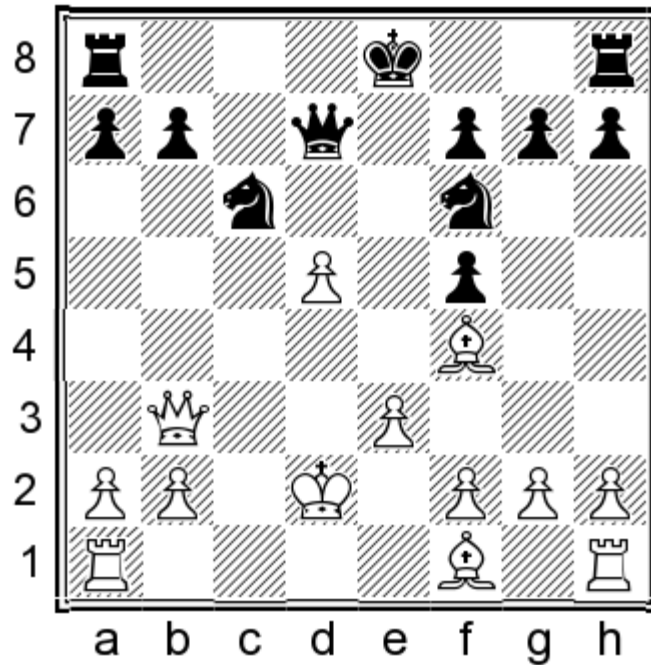


with more than enough compensation for the exchange.

**11.cxd5 ♖xd2+**

And not even now 11...♗e4 because of 12.dxc6 with a clear advantage to White. 12...♙xd2+ 13.♔d1 bxc6 14.f3 ♗f2+ 15.♙xd2 ♖d7+ (15...♗xh1 16.♙c4±) 16.♙c2 ♗xh1 17.♙c4 ♗f2 18.♙g3 ♖d8 19.♖c3± and the knight is trapped!

**12.♙xd2 ♖d7?**

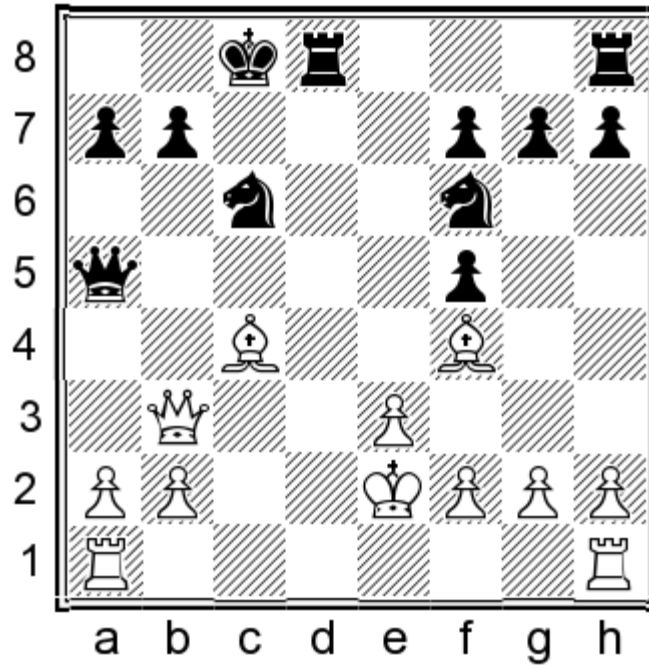


This was a good idea, but on the wrong square! The correct move was 12...♖d8! because it threatens also ♖a5! 13.♖d1! ♖xd5+ 14.♖xd5 ♗xd5 15.♙g3± and White is better, owning two bishops in an open position.

**13.♙e1!± ♖xd5 14.♙c4 ♖a5+**

Immediately losing is 14...♖xg2 15.♙xf7+ ♔f8 16.♙d6+ ♜e7 17.♚e6 ♞fd5 18.♚xd5 ♚xd5 19.♙xd5 ♞d8 20.♙xe7+-

15.♙e2 0-0-0?



A pseudo-active move or maybe better to say a “suicidal move”. Black’s king would be safer after 15...0-0 but even that doesn’t help a lot! 16.♚xb7 ♜e5 17.b4! ♚a4 18.♙b3 ♚e8 19.♞ac1 ♞b8 20.♚c7 ♚b5+ 21.♙c4 ♜xc4 22.♚xc4+- and Black is forced to change Queens!

16.♞hd1+-

The pawn is lost and ♙e6 is in the air.

16...♜e4?

16...♞xd1 17.♞xd1 ♞d8 18.♙xf7 ♞xd1 19.♙xd1+-

17.♙e6+

Conclusion: If you have a position with ♚b3-♚c8 inserted, don’t allow Black to take a space advantage after c4! Try to open the center and to use the bad position of the black queen with the move c4!

1-0

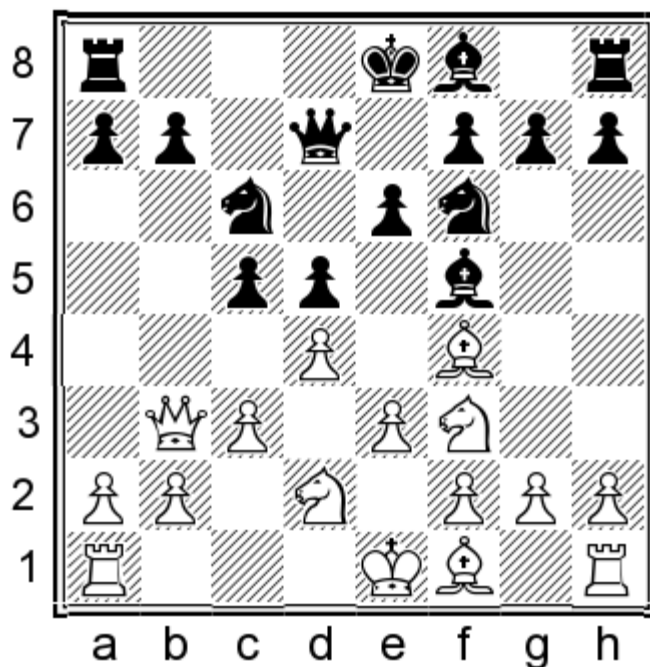
**G. Kamsky (2680) — C. Holt (2522)**

Millionaire Chess Op 2015 Las Vegas USA (7.7), 11.10.2015

Kamsky is a well-known “London player” these last few years, so it’s very unusual that somebody entered this position against him unprepared. Compared with the previous game, the young US player opted for 7...♚d7? instead of 7...♚c8! and encountered serious problems. Black was left with his king in the center which Kamsky targeted with powerful initiative-gaining moves and won this game in great style!

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♗d2 ♙f5 6.♗gf3 e6 7.♚b3 ♚d7?

This move is a serious mistake! We can smell in the air that something is wrong with Black's position!



8.♙b5!±

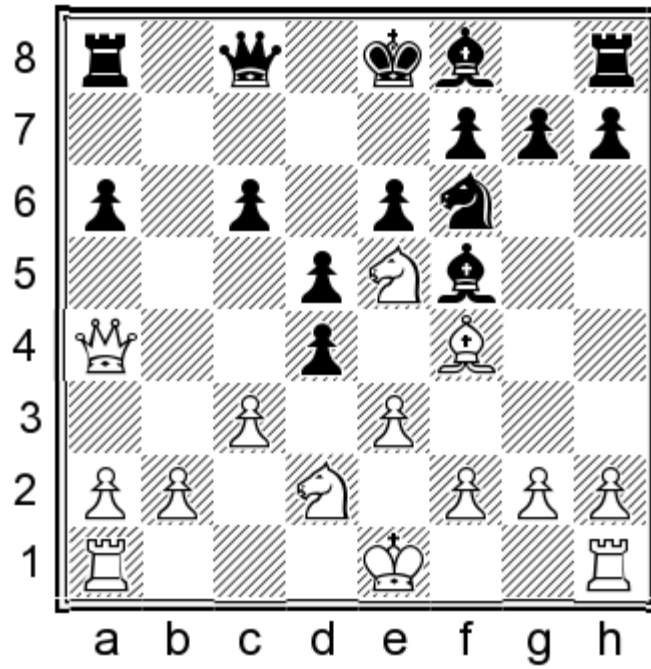
The best move which brings the initiative to White! 8.♗e5 seems logical but after 8...♗xe5 9.dxe5 c4! Comes, which is the main point of ...♚d7, e.g. 10.♗xc4 dxc4 11.♙xc4 0-0-0! 12.exf6 ♚d2+ 13.♔f1 gxf6∞ with a total mess.

8...a6?!

Black neglects his development! It was necessary to play 8...c4! 9.♚a4 ♙d6 10.♙xd6 (10.♗e5?! ♙xe5 11.♙xe5 ♗e4↗) 10...♚xd6 11.b3 cxb3 12.axb3 0-0 13.0-0±

9.♗e5! ♚c8 10.♙xc6+ bxc6 11.♚a4± cxd4?!

With this move Black opens the c-file and makes his position harder to defend.



The silicon monster goes for 11...♖b8 but White is still on top. The reader can check the following analysis. 12.♗b3! (12.♗xc6 ♜xb2↗ and White doesn't have a good knight jump! 12.g4 ♗xg4 13.♗xg4 ♜xb2 14.♗e5 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♙b4 16.e4 ♙xe4 17.♞g1 0-0 18.♗xc6 ♜b7 19.♗xb4 ♜xb4 20.♞a3 ♜c8↗) 12...♞b5 (12...c4 13.♗xc4! dxc4 14.♙xb8 cxb3 15.♙g3 bxa2 16.♞xa2 ♙d3 17.♔d2! ♙b5 18.c4 ♙b4+ 19.♔e2+-) 13.dxc5 ♗e4 (13...♙xc5 14.♗xc5 ♜xc5 15.♞a3 ♞b5 16.c4 ♞b6 17.♞c1±) 14.c4 dxc4 15.♗xc4 ♗xc5 16.♗xc5 ♙xc5 17.♙d6 ♞b4 18.♙xc5 ♞xa4 19.♗d6+ ♔d7 20.♗xc8 ♞xc8 21.0-0±;

11...♗h5 12.g4! ♗xf4 13.gxf5 f6 14.exf4 fxe5 15.fxe5 exf5 16.♗b3±

### 12.cxd4 ♗d7 13.♞c1!

Black's position is already beyond repair. 13.♗xc6? ♗b6-+;

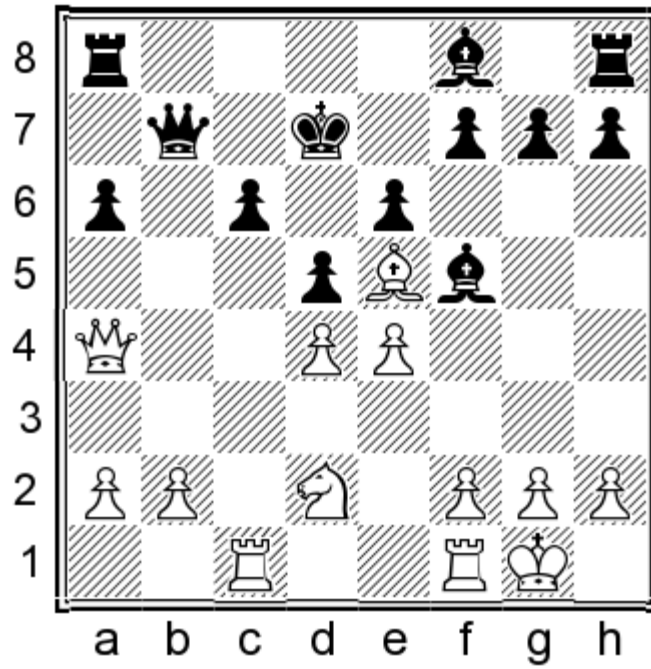
13.♞xc6? ♞xc6 14.♗xc6 ♜c8↗

### 13...♗xe5 14.♙xe5 ♔d7

It's not great, but there is no other way to defend the c6 pawn.

### 15.0-0 ♞b7 16.e4!

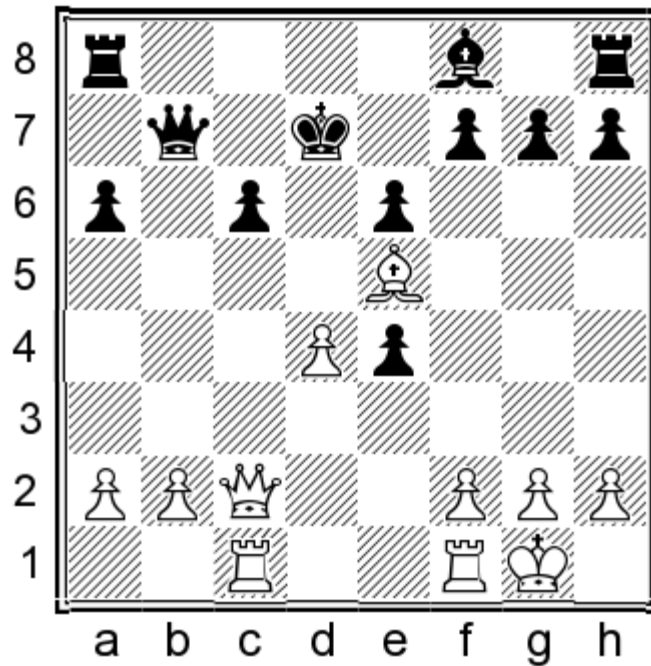
According to the demands of the position — not giving Black any time for consolidation.



16...Qxe4

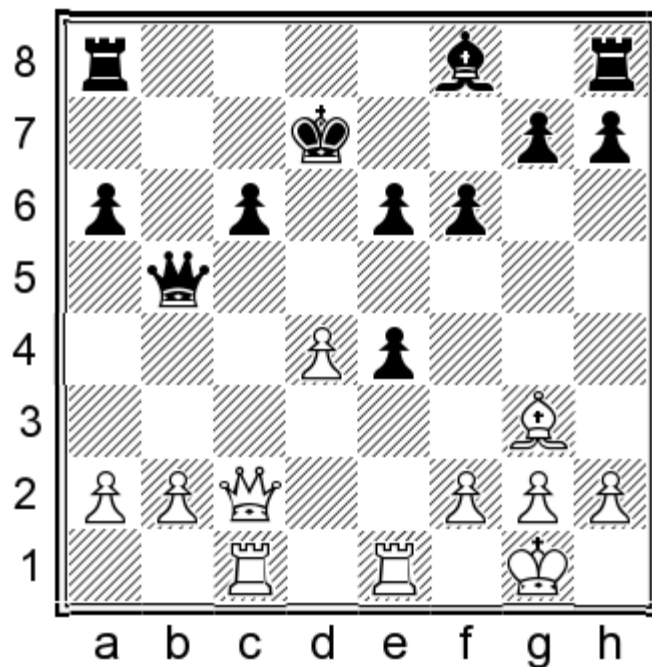
If 16...dxe4 17.♘c4 ♖c8 18.♖c3+- and ♖b3 cannot be stopped.

17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♖c2



Good enough. The phrase ‘Tal-like’ can be used after 18.d5! exd5 19.♖f1 ♗b5 20.♗xe4 ♖e8 21.♗f5+ ♔d8 22.♙c3 f6 23.a4! Deflection. 23...♗xa4 24.♖xd5+ cxd5 25.♗xd5+ ♗d7 26.♙a5+ ♔e7 27.♖e1+-

18...f6 19.♙g3 ♗b5 20.♖fe1!



A quiet move, inviting the last piece to the party. Black would enjoy a little break after 20. ♖xe4 ♔d5

**20... ♔d6**

20...f5 21. ♖e3! followed by ♖b3!

**21. ♔xd6 ♔xd6 22. ♗xe4 ♗d5 23. ♗g4**

Every move has to be a threat if White wants to retain the initiative!

**23... ♖hg8 24. ♖c5! ♗xa2**

Now the queen has wandered far away which gives new motifs to white!

**25. ♗f3 ♖ac8 26. ♗c3!**

Black's king is in permanent trouble, and now he also must think about his 'Lady'. White's threat is ♖a5.

**26... ♖b8 27. ♖xc6+ ♔d7 28. ♖c7+ ♔d8 29. ♗c5**

Gata greatly punished the inaccuracy of Black in the opening! Conclusion: It's very useful to memorise the critical moment in the game after the inaccurate 7... ♗d7? On first sight it seems like the strongest is 8. ♘e5 but it's not! Don't forget to play first 8. ♔b5!

**1-0**

**N. Sedlak (2572) — D. Svetushkin (2589)**

Kostic Memorial 17th Vrsac (3), 22.11.2012

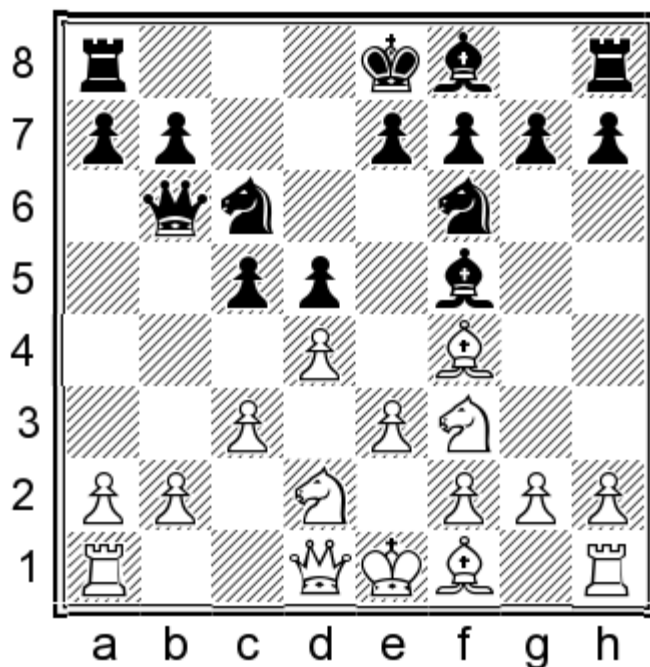
This is one of my finest games in the London! My opponent, a well-known Moldavian player, chose one of the most critical positions in the 'system'! Compared with the two previous games, also in a classical set-up, Dmitry chose 6... ♗b6 instead of 6...e6! The idea of that move is to force White to play 7. ♗b3 and after 7...c4 to go into a pleasant

endgame! However, I was well prepared with prior experience in this position and I won the theoretical duel in the opening!

**1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♗d2 ♙f5 6.♗gf3!**

An important moment and move order! The thematic move 6.♙b3 doesn't promise an advantage in this position. It allows 6...♙d7! 7.♗gf3 c4! 8.♙d1 e6= and Black is fine! A space advantage with nice control of the e4 square guarantees him a comfortable position!

**6...♙b6**

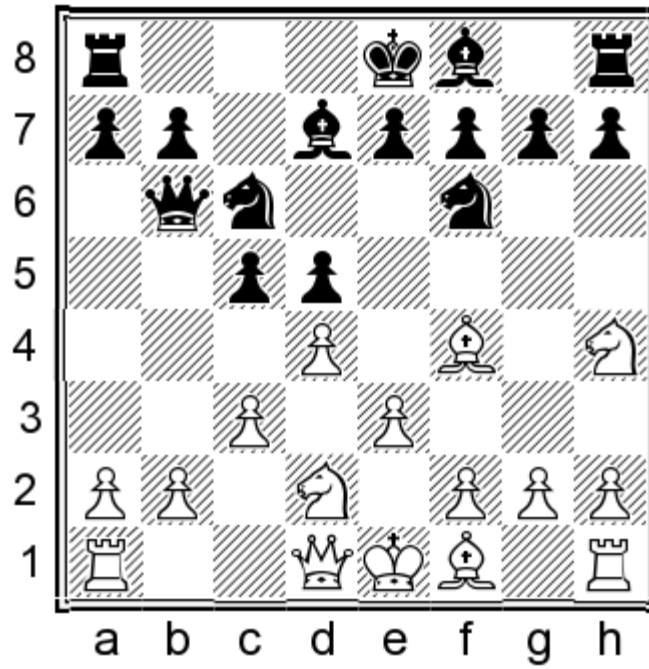


**7.♗h4!**

This is the point! If White wants an opening advantage, this is the only way. The idea is removal of Black's bishop from b1–h7 diagonal and creating a square for the queen on c2! An interesting move, rare in praxis, is the paradoxical 7.dxc5!? ♙xb2 (After 7... ♙xc5?! White would have the opportunity to take the initiative. 8.♗b3 ♙b6 9.a4 a6 10.a5 ♙d8 11.h3 e6 12.♗bd4 ♗xd4 13.exd4± The resulting position is in White's favor as Black does not have a minority attack. White can use the c5 and e5 squares.) 8.♗d4 White has some initiative, but Black can hold everything. An interesting duel continued 8...e5 9.♙xe5 ♙g4 10.♞b1 ♙a3 11.f3 ♗xe5 12.fxg4 ♙xc5 13.♗b5 ♙xa2 14.♞a1 ♙b2 15.♞b1 ♙a2 16.♞a1 ♙b2 17.♞b1 1/2–1/2 (17) Prie,E (2490)-Flear,G (2483) San Sebastian 2011;

7.♙b3?! c4 8.♙xb6 axb6 9.a3 b5 10.♞c1 h6 11.♙e2 e6=

**7...♙d7**



Almost always we see the typical move 7...♙e4!? 8.♖b3 c4 9.♗xb6 axb6 10.♙e5! Very important, adding some pressure on e4. 10...♟d7 (10...b5 11.♙xf6 gxf6 12.♞xe4 dxe4 13.f3 exf3 14.♞xf3±) 11.♙xc4! dxc4 12.♞xe4 ♞cxe5 13.dxe5 ♞xe5 14.♞e2± or 7...♙g4 8.♖b3 c4 9.♗c2 e6 10.h3 ♙h5 11.g4 ♙g6 12.♞xg6 hxg6 13.♙g2±

### 8.♖b3 c4

A typical reaction. Black doesn't have many better options. An equally decent alternative was 8...h6 9.♞hf3! (9.♗xb6 enters a slightly worse endgame 9...axb6 10.♙c7 cxd4 11.exd4 b5! 12.♙xb5 ♞xd4 13.♙xd7+ ♞xd7 14.cxd4 ♞xc7) 9...c4 10.♗c2 ♞h5 (10...g6 11.e4!±) 11.♙e5±

### 9.♗c2 ♞h5!?

Black cannot stop the e4 or b3 levers, but can, at least, achieve the advantage of the pair of bishops. 9...h6 10.♞hf3 g6 11.e4±

### 10.♙g3 g6

Playing aggressively with 10...♞xg3 11.hxg3 and now 11...e5 has drawbacks (11...e6 12.e4±) 12.dxe5 ♞xe5 13.♞df3! ♞g4 14.♞d1 ♙e6 15.♙e2±;

10...e6 doesn't change White's plan 11.♙e2 ♞xg3 12.hxg3 ♗c7 13.e4± Eljanov,P (2742)-Ponomarev,R (2744) Moscow 2010

### 11.e4

You can always be satisfied getting in the e4 push in this type of the position.

### 11...e6

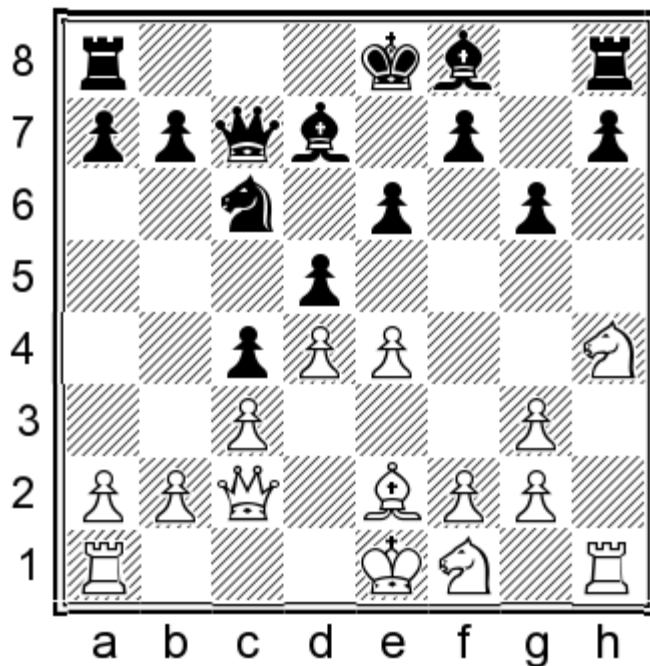
Black must hold the center!

### 12.♙e2 ♞xg3 13.hxg3 ♗c7

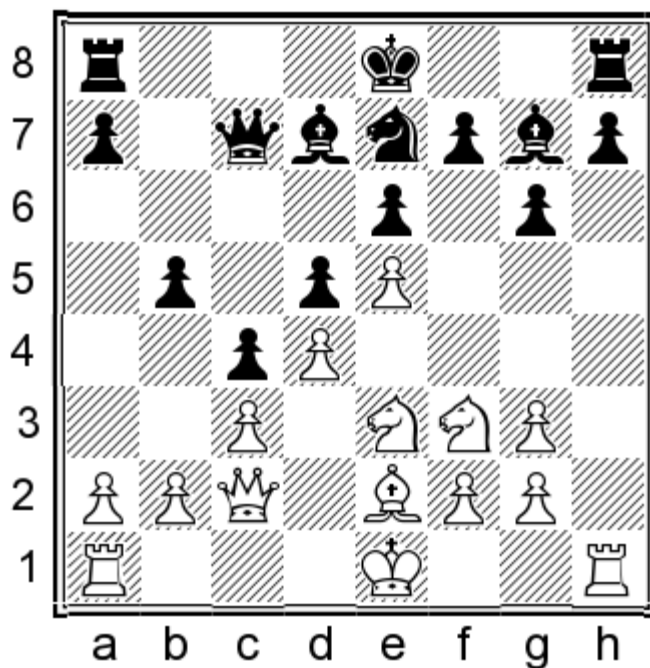
Preparing counterplay on the queenside with ...b5-b4

### 14. ♖f1!

This is a typical method from similar positions. Transferring the knight to e3, adding some pressure on d5 and, of course, waiting for the right moment to join the attack from g4.



14... ♗e7 15. ♗e3 b5 16. ♗f3 ♕g7 17. e5!±



Closing time. Black has gained control over d5, prepared ...de4 with ...♗c6, so let's go for a position where knights dominate bishops.

17... a5 18. a3 ♖b8 19. ♗g4

A bit early! Over the board is different. Now I see that a better way was 19. ♖d2! with a later ♗g4!

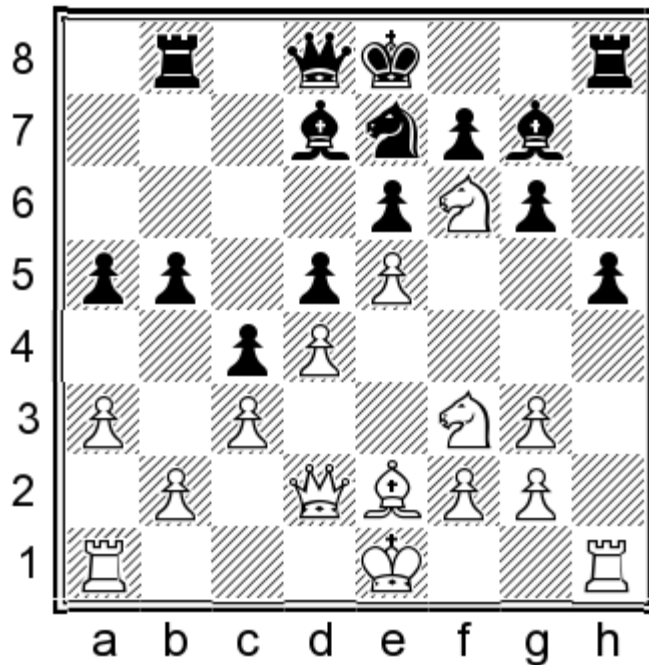
**19... ♖d8?**

Trying to control the weak square f6. Actually a better move in this position is 19... ♗g8! with the same idea and after 20. ♖d2 h5 when Black has covered the dark squares well!

**20. ♖d2 h5**

Now 20... ♗g8 is not so good, because of 21. ♖f4 h5 22. ♗g5 ♖e7 23. ♗h2! with a strong outpost at g5.

**21. ♗f6+!?**

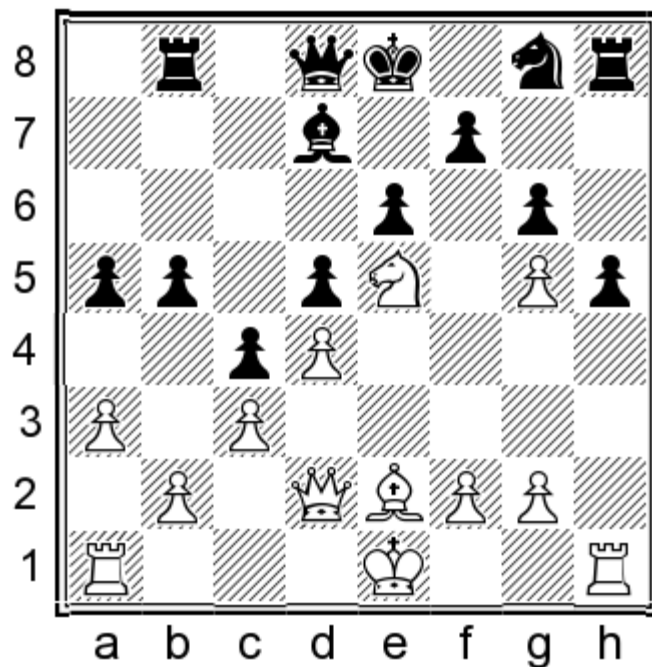


An interesting decision, if I can say so. Temporarily sacrificing a pawn for the e5 outpost. A bonus is the weak black squares around Black's king. But White would have an advantage even after 21. ♖f4 hxg4 22. ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 23. ♖h6 ♗xe5 24. ♗xe5 ♗c6 25. ♗xg4±

**21... ♗xf6 22. exf6 ♗g8 23. g4! ♖xf6**

23... ♗xf6 is strategically bad. 24. ♗e5 ♗e4 25. ♖e3 (25. ♖f4? ♖f6) 25... h4 26. ♗f3 ♖g5 (26... ♗f6 27. g5+–) 27. ♗xe4 ♖xe3+ 28. fxg3 dxe4 29. 0-0 ♖h7 30. g5 ♗e7 31. ♖f4±

**24. g5 ♖d8 25. ♗e5±**



White is dominant in this position. His plan is clear; to open the h-file and use the weak black squares.

**25...♞e7 26.♞f4 ♜f8 27.g4! h4**

The only move because Black cannot allow White's knight to g4. 27...hxg4 28.♞h8! ♞f5 29.♞xf8+ ♔xf8 30.♞xd7+-

**28.♞xh4 ♞c6 29.♔d2**

The king is safe here! It's time for another rook to enter into the game!

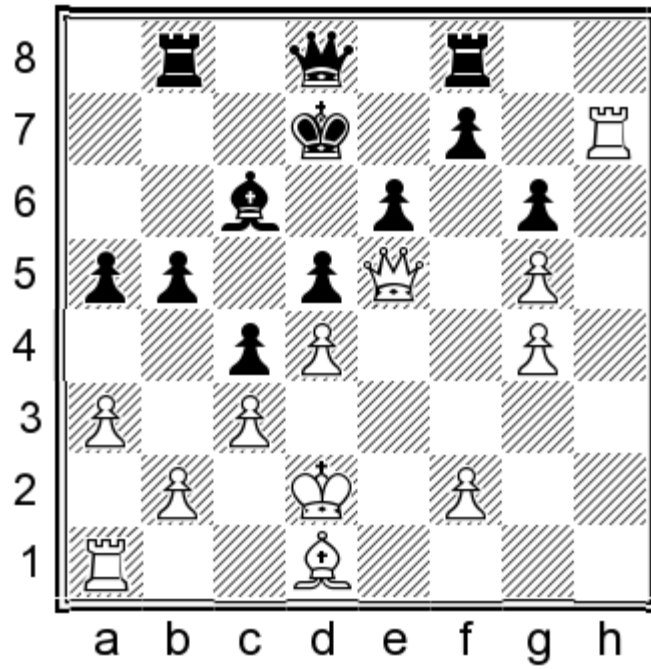
**29...♞xe5 30.♞xe5 ♘c6**

After 30...b4 White's rook on a1 becomes very useful! 31.axb4 axb4 32.♙d1! ♜a8 33.♞xa8 ♞xa8 34.♙c2± and f4-f5 is coming soon!

**31.♞h7 ♔d7**

Black tries to evacuate his king!

**32.♙d1!**



The only piece without an important function was the bishop, now going to the ideal c2-square.

32...♙e7 33.♚c2 ♜g8□

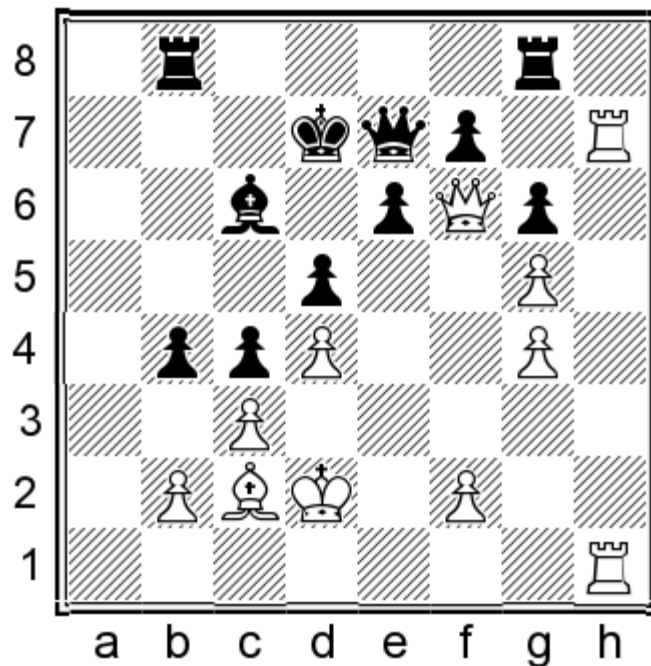
Aimed against ♙g6

34.♜ah1

What else?

34...b4 35.axb4 axb4 36.♙f6!?!+-

The safest way. In the endgame, the weak pawn on f7 (and weak dark squares, of course) are good enough.



Also promising was 36.♖a1 and Black cannot parry with 36...♖a8 37.♖xa8 ♗xa8 38.♜f4! ♜f8 39.♗xg6+–

**36...bxc3+ 37.bxc3 ♜xf6 38.gxf6 ♜bf8 39.♖a1!**

Black's rooks are busy defending the f7 pawn so the queenside is now "empty".

**39...♗b7 40.g5 ♗d6 41.♗e3 ♜h8**

Black is helpless. Giving up a pawn, but after 41...♗c7 only torture awaits 42.♗f4 ♗d6 43.♖a7 ♗c7 44.♗e5 ♗b6 45.♖a1 ♗c6 46.♖ah1 ♗c7 47.♖g7+–

**42.♗xg6! ♜xh7**

42...fxg6 43.♖xb7+–

**43.♗xh7**

And the rest of the game was just routine!

**43...♜h8 44.g6 fxg6 45.f7 ♜f8 46.♗xg6 ♗e7 47.♗f4 ♗f6 48.♗h5**

The winning plan is ♖g1–g8.

**48...♖xf7**

Conclusion: In this game the most important thing was the move orders! Try not to forget 6.♗gf3! with the idea of removing the black bishop from f5. White needs to have c2 square for the queen after Black's move ...c4! After removing the bishop from f5 and diagonal b1–h7, ♜b3 is possible!

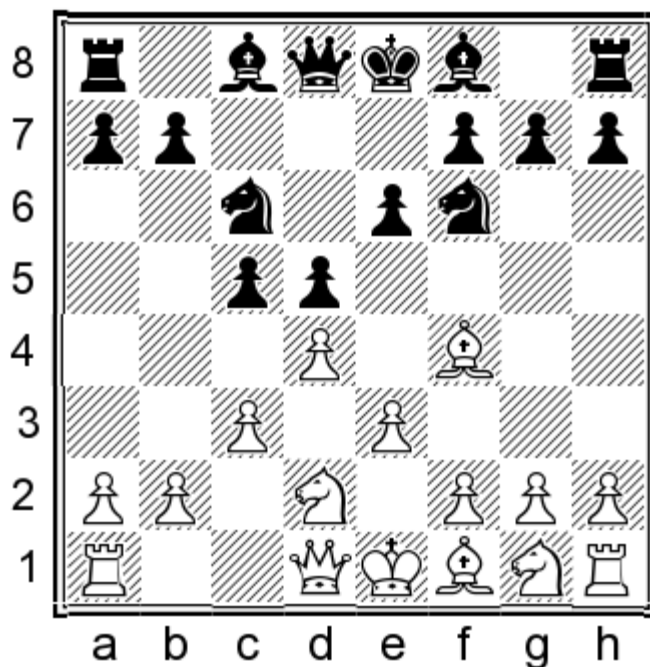
**1–0**

# CHAPTER FOUR

## CLASSICAL SET-UP WITH ...e6

In this chapter we come to the main, and the most often played, position at the highest level. This position has characteristics of an improved Slav Defense and Stonewall with reversed colours with a tempo more for White. A big plus in White's position is the 'solved problem' of the bishop on f4, as I said in the preface. Also in my chess praxis I often met this position which allows for very rich play.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♘d2 e6



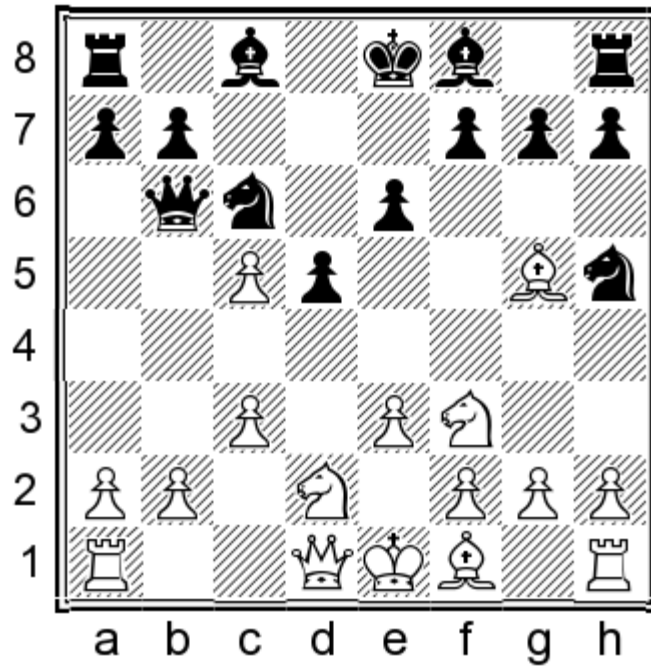
My suggestion is to play

6.♘gf3

for the simple reason that it provides more opportunities. For players who don't like complications I can offer them 6.♘d3!? which shows the flexibility of 2.♘f4! The idea of 6.♘d3 is simply to make a Stonewall position after 6...♘d6 7.♘xd6 ♖xd6 8.f4 cxd4! 9.cxd4 0-0 10.a3 ♘e7 11.♘gf3 ♗b6?! This was not the best moment to enter into the endgame, especially not against Kramnik! (11...♘f5!? 12.♗e2 ♘g4∞) 12.♗b3 ♗xb3 13.♘xb3 b6 14.♖c1± Kramnik-Grandelius Norway 2016.

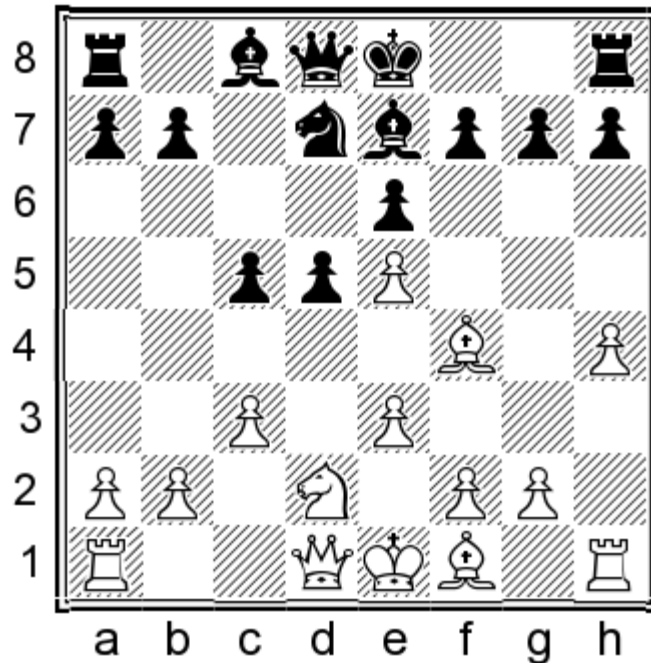
6...♘d6

The most logical move! Other moves promise nothing good for Black! White must always count on moves like 6...♘h5?! 7.♘g5 ♗b6 (7...♘e7 8.♘xe7 ♗xe7 9.♘e5 ♘f6 10.f4±) 8.dxc5!



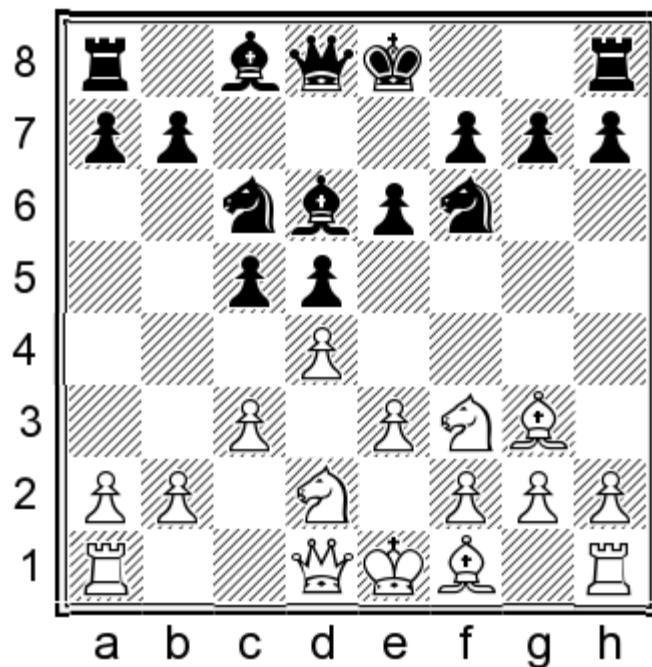
8...♙xc5 (8...♜xb2? 9.♘d4!±) 9.b4 ♙e7 10.b5 ♘b8 11.♙xe7 ♚xe7 12.c4± Dgebuadze A.-Savchenko S. Ubeda open 1998;

6...♙e7 is a little passive and my suggestion is to continue with 7.♘e5! mainly against ♘h5. (7.h3 is not so good because Black can continue with 7...♙d6! and White lacks the possibility of the typical London move ♙g3 with a later ♘e5; 7.♙d3 ♘h5!∞) 7...0-0 (7...♘xe5 8.dxe5 ♘d7 9.h4!



the idea is to prevent ...g5 and to play ♜g4 next. 9...♙xh4? 10.♜g4 g5 11.♝xh4! gxh4 12.♜g7 ♜f8 13.♙g5+-) 8.♙d3± and White has an easy plan to organize an attack via ♜f3-♜h3. Check Gorovets A.-Ynojosa F., USA, 2015.

7.♙g3!



The best reaction! Controlling the e5 square is very important! Here Black has three different plans which will be shown throughout the games in this chapter.

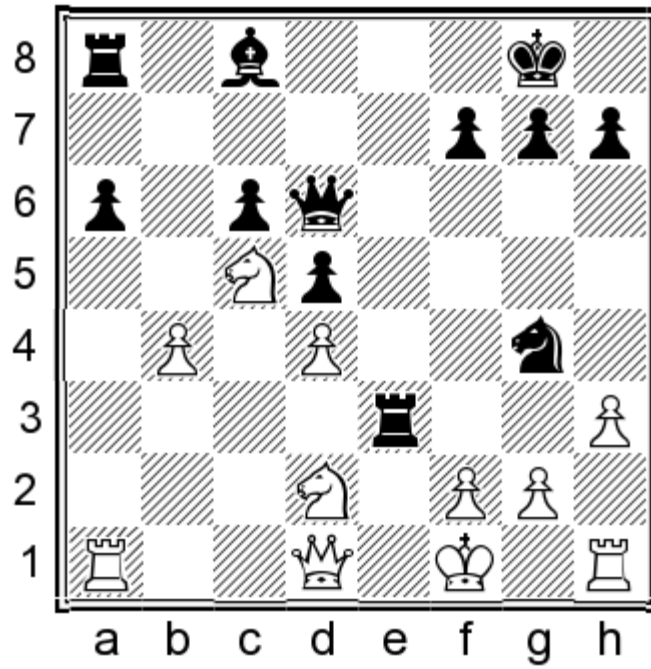
### 7...0-0

7...♖e7 8.♗e5 ♘xe5 (8...♗d7 9.♙b5!? -see Prie E.-Gozzoli Y. Fra ch 2012.) 9.dxe5 ♗d7 10.f4 -see Prie E.-Dgebuadze A. Condom open 2012.

7...♙xg3?! The idea is clear: to go for ...e5 after ...♖e7 or ...♗d6! But from the other side White gains new possibilities with the open h-file, and Black also has the problem of what to do with his king. Short-castling always brings big headaches for Black. 8.hxg3 ♗d6 9.♙d3 -see Sedlak N.-Bodiroga P. Vrnjacka Banja 2012.

### 8.♙d3

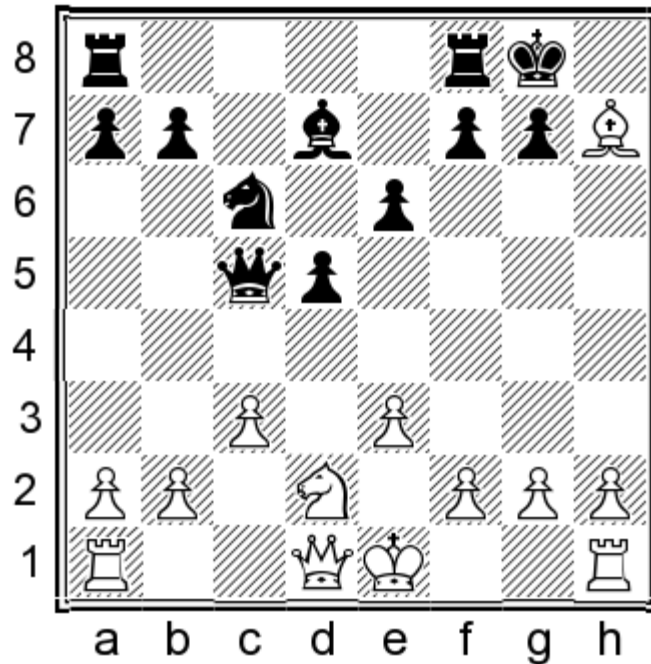
This is the main and most played move! As always, interesting is 8.♙b5!? with the idea of fighting for the e5 square and preventing the ...b6 plan! The best answer for Black is 8...a6! (Avoiding a position with doubled pawns is not the best idea 8...♗e7 9.♙d3! The bishop has finished his job and goes back to its best place: the knight has been removed from control of the e5 square. 9...b6 (9...♗g6 10.♗e5 b6 11.h4↑ Kamsky G.-Li Ruifeng Washington open 2015.) 10.e4! dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.♙xe4 ♗d5 13.dxc5 (13.c4? f5!↑) 13...♙xc5 14.0-0 ♙b7 15.♙e1± White's pieces are better placed. Black must always worry about c4 or b4.) 9.♙xc6 bxc6 10.♗e5 (10.♗a4 cxd4! 11.♙xd6 (11.♗xc6? ♙xg3 12.♗xa8 dxe3--+) 11...♗xd6 12.cxd4 a5! (12...♙b8 13.♗b3 ♗e4 14.♙c1±) 13.0-0 ♙a6 14.♙fc1 ♙b5 15.♗c2 a4= the White knight can't come to the c5 square) 10...♗c7 11.♗d3!? here the idea is to play on the dark squares! 11...c4 12.♙xd6 ♗xd6 13.♗c5 e5! 14.b3 cxb3 15.axb3 ♙e8 16.0-0?! In this blitz game, White missed the next move (Better is to wait with castling and strengthen the knight with 16.b4!? after which 16...♗g4?! doesn't work 17.h3 exd4 18.cxd4 ♙xe3+? 19.♙f1!



A nice defensive move! White avoids check and now Black's pieces hang: 19... ♖h6 20. ♔g1!±) 16... ♘g4!→ Carlsen M.-Karjakin S. Wch blitz Berlin 2015.

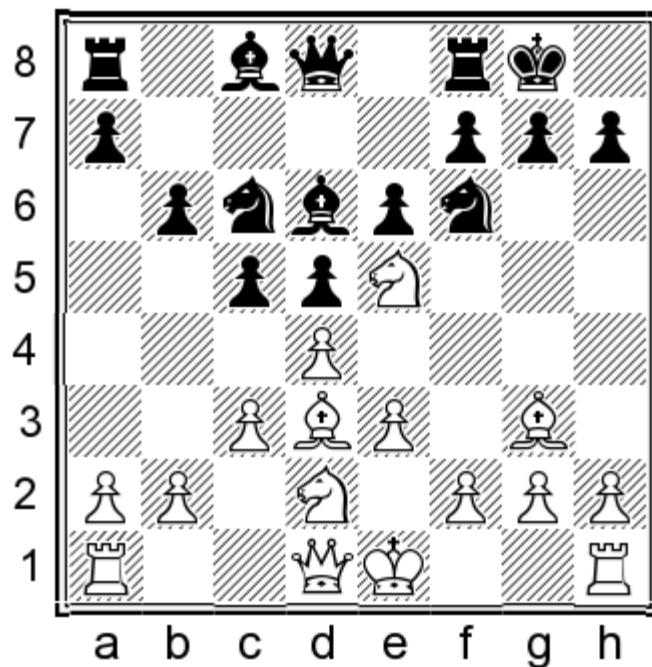
### 8...b6

This is the most logical plan. Black is finishing development with the idea of fighting for the e4 square after ♗b7-♘e7-♘e4. A very important line is 8... ♖e7 9. ♘e5 ♘d7 10. ♘xd7! ♗xd7? 11. ♗xd6 ♖xd6 12. dxc5 ♖xc5 13. ♗xh7+!!



See Kamsky-Shankland Eastern Class 2014.

### 9. ♘e5



In this position three continuations are possible, all of which give a very rich play and the most common is 9.e4!? ♕e7! (9...dxe4?! -see Sedlak N. -Prusikin M. Regionalliga 2014.) 10.e5 -see Grischuk A. -Nakamura H. EU cup 2015. The latest idea is 9.♖e2!? ♕b7 10.♞d1! with e4 plan-see Kamsky-Goganov Aeroflot 2016. My suggestion is to mix all of them, thereby avoiding preparation from your opponents. Nowadays, modern chess require such ability!

### 9...♕b7

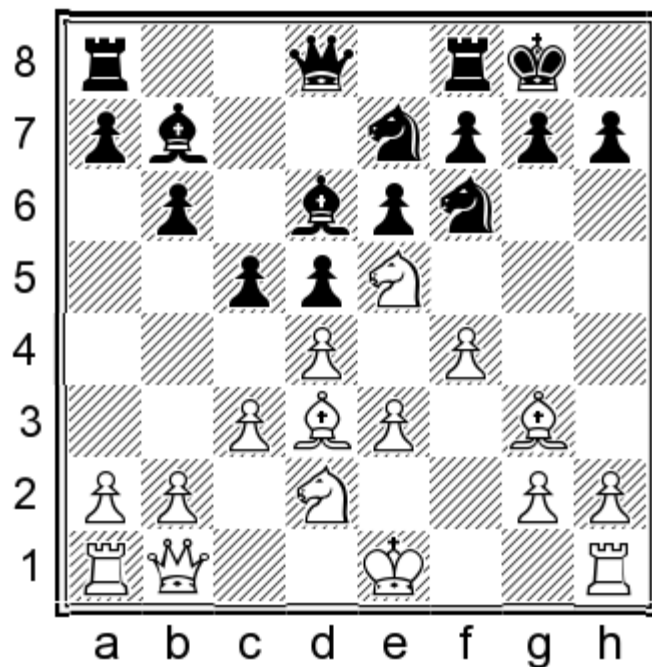
9...♖c7?! 10.f4 ♘e7 11.♗h4!±

See Sedlak N.—Sargissian G. Valjevo 2012.

### 10.f4 ♘e7!

With the plan of fighting for the e4 square by ...♗e4, or with the plan ...♗f5-♕e7-♗d6! 10...♞c8?! 11.♗h4 ♕e7 12.♗xf6!± See Sedlak N.-Brkic A. Reykjavik 2015.

### 11.♖b1!



This is the critical move: White covers the e4 and f5 squares.

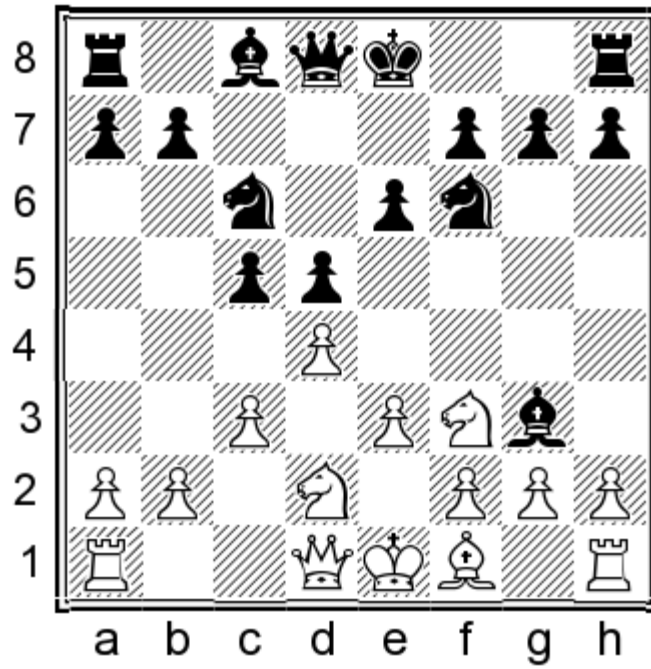
See Izoria Z., Brattain, USA, 2015.

**N. Sedlak — P. Bodioga**

Vrnjacka Banja, 28.04.2012

In the classical set-up with 5...e6 Black used plan with 7...♗g3 aiming to play a fast ...e5! I chose the plan with 9.♗d3 which offers the possibility to castle long at some point. My opponent didn't react well with 9...♗d7?! after which he encountered serious problems, mainly due to the position of his king, which proved expensive at the end. This game shows the negatives of 7...♗g3 and how White has to use the h-file.

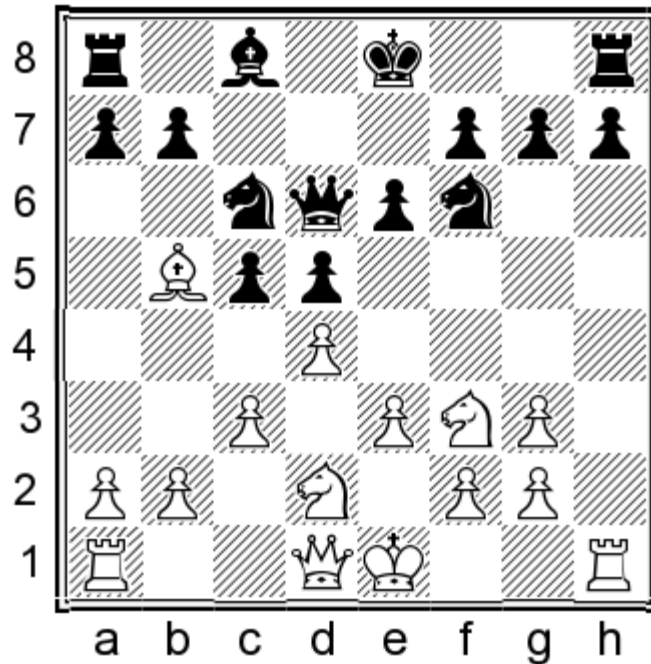
1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♗d2 e6 6.♗gf3 ♗d6 7.♗g3 ♗xg3?!



A very common plan with the idea of playing ...♖d6 or ...♗e7 with next e5. This plan has one big minus — White gets the open h-file! Properly using the h-file and with a timely opening of the position in the center, Black's monarch may be at risk.

**8.hxg3 ♖d6 9.♗d3!?**

It's hard to say which move is better: 9.♗d3!? or 9.♗b5!? It's matter of the taste! My opinion is that both give a small advantage. Another plan which looks perhaps a little bit simpler has been played by Gata Kamsky 9.♗b5!?



in order to prevent ...e5 and achieve control over the dark squares 9...♗d7 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♘e5 ♘d7 12.f4 ♘xe5 13.fxe5 ♗e7 14.♗g4 f5 15.♗h5+ ♘d7 16.a4 ♘c7 17.dxc5! ♗xc5 18.♗g5 ♗f8 19.♘f3± Kamsky G.-Potkin V. FIDE World blitz 2013.

## 9...♙d7?!

This move was probably played to avoid White's queen maneuver after 9...e5. However Black should continue with 9...e5 after which my idea was to enter the endgame after 10.dxe5 ♖xe5 11.♗xe5 ♜xe5 12.♞a4+! ♙d7 13.♞f4 ♞xf4 (13... ♞e7 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.e4± Grachev,B (2684)-Potkin,V (2606) Ulan Ude 2009) 14.gxf4± White has a pleasant endgame and a clear plan of launching his pawns on the kingside, however Black doesn't have weaknesses! If readers doesn't like this one, you can always choose 9.♙b5.

## 10.♞e2

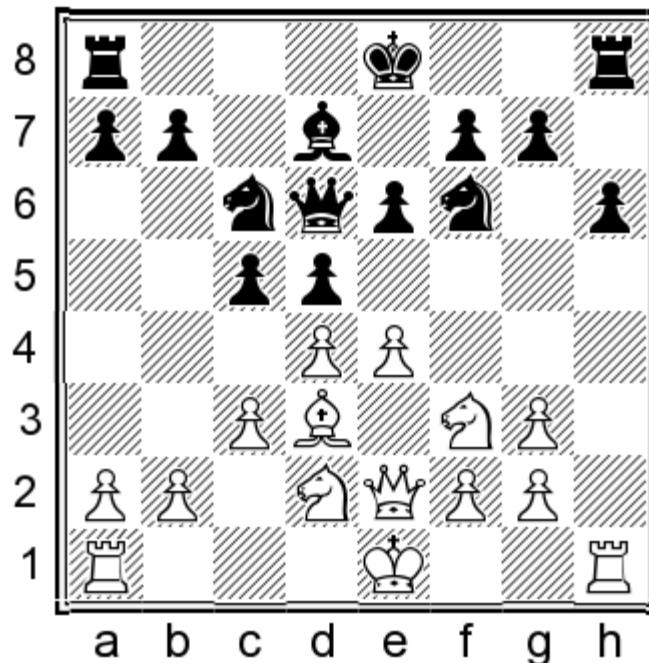
Development and a multifunctional move! Waiting with castling and threatening e4!

## 10...h6

One more waiting move! Other moves also shows a downside to Black's position. 10...0-0-0 is too risky 11.dxc5 ♞xc5 12.0-0 with a fast attacking on the queenside!

After 10...e5 the black center is unstable 11.dxc5! ♞xc5 12.e4 dxe4 (12...d4 13.♗b3 ♞e7 14.cxd4 exd4 15.0-0-0±) 13.♗xe4 ♗xe4 14.♙xe4 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 f5!? (15...f6 16.♞xh7 ♞xh7 17.♙xh7±; 15...h6 16.♞d5 ♞e7 17.♗xe5! 1-0 (17) Sedlak,N (2568)-Hobber,A (2299) Norway 2013) 16.♙d5! An important move with the idea being to force e4 and gain the d4 square for the knight! (16.♞xd7 unfortunately don't bring any advantage after 16...♗xd7 17.♙xf5+ ♗c7 18.♗g5 ♗d4!±; 16.♙xc6 ♙xc6 17.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 18.♞xh7 ♞d5! 19.c4 ♞a5 20.a3 e4 21.♗d2 ♞e5) 16...e4 17.♙xc6 ♙xc6 18.♗d4±

## 11.e4!→

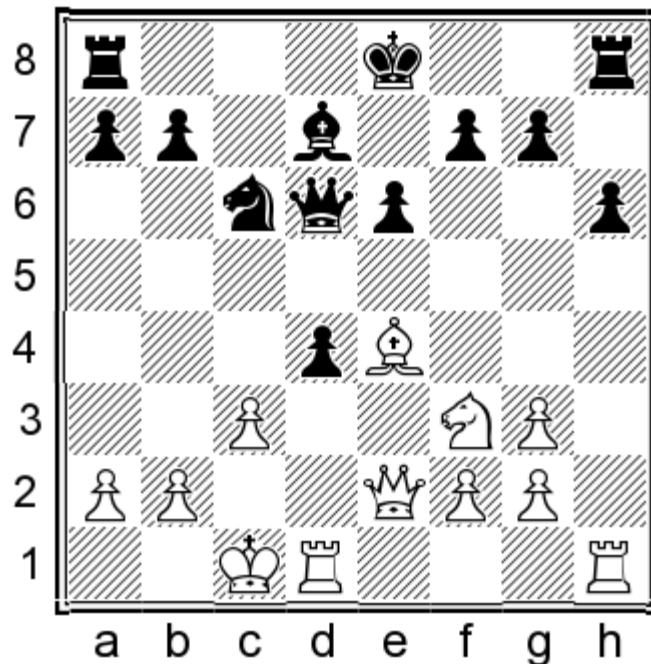


The right moment for opening the position in the center and grabbing the initiative!

## 11...dxe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♙xe4 cxd4

More-or-less forced! 13...0-0 14.dxc5 ♞xc5 15.0-0-0 ♞ad8 16.g4, with g5 next or 13...0-0-0 14.0-0-0 ♞he8 15.♗e5! ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♞c7 17.♞d6±

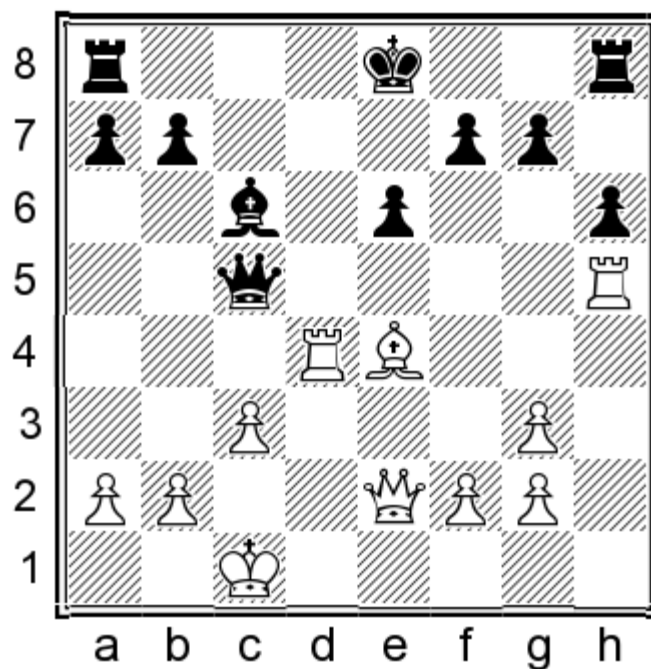
## 14.0-0!



### 14...♚c5?!

This turns out to be a mistake, because the white rook enters the game with tempo via h5. Better was 14...♞c8 15.♕b1 ♜e7 16.♗xd4 (16.cxd4 ♗b4! 17.♙xb7 ♞b8 18.♙e4 0-0) 16...♗xd4 17.♞xd4 ♙c6 18.♙xc6+ ♞xc6? Sedlak N.-Rama L. Cetinje 2016. (18...bxc6±) 19.♞hd1 ♞b6 20.♞d8+! ♜xd8 21.♞xd8+ ♗xd8 22.♜e5 ♗e7 23.♜xg7 ♞d8 24.♜xh6±; 14...0-0 15.♗xd4 ♜e7 16.♙c2!→

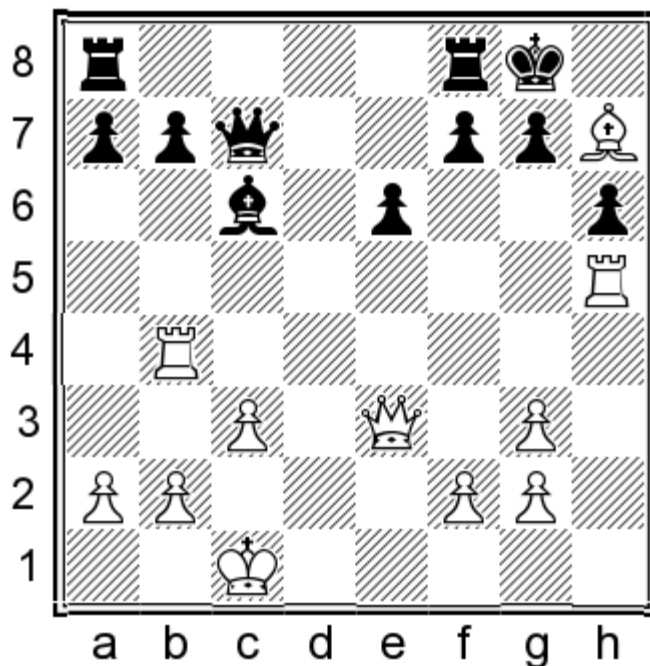
### 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4 16.♞xd4 ♙c6 17.♞h5!±



This is what I am talking about; the h-file is very important.

## 17...g5

A further weakening! More logical was 17...♖b6 18.♗b4 ♘c7 19.♙e3!± excellent initiative-gaining moves which keep Black's king in the center! Black is not able to play 19...0-0 (19...♙xe4 20.♙xe4 ♗b8 21.g4→) 20.♙h7+!!



Forcing the black king into further checks! 20...♙xh7 (20...♙h8 21.♗xh6 gxh6 22.♙xh6+-) 21.♗xh6+ gxh6 22.♗h4 ♙g8 23.♙xh6 f5 24.♙h8+ ♙f7 25.♙h7+-

## 18.♗c4

There is no respite for Black!

## 18...♙d6 19.♙xc6+

One more weakness appears!

## 19...bxc6 20.♗d4 ♘c5 21.♙e3!

Threatening ♗d8

## 21...♙f5 22.♗d6 ♙b5 23.♗h1+-

The rook has finished his job! Black is left with huge holes in his position, is without co-ordination and also has a weak king!

## 23...♗b8 24.b3 a5 25.♙d4 0-0 26.♙f6

There is no defence against ♗h6 or ♙h6! Conclusion: After the exchange of the bishop by taking on g3 and opening the h-file, always try to use the h-file! Don't think about short castling, your best option is long castling and opening the position in center! Black's king is unsafe!

1-0

**A. Gorovets (2515) — F. J. Ynojosa Aponte (2415)**

USA tt ICC INT (1), 25.08.2015

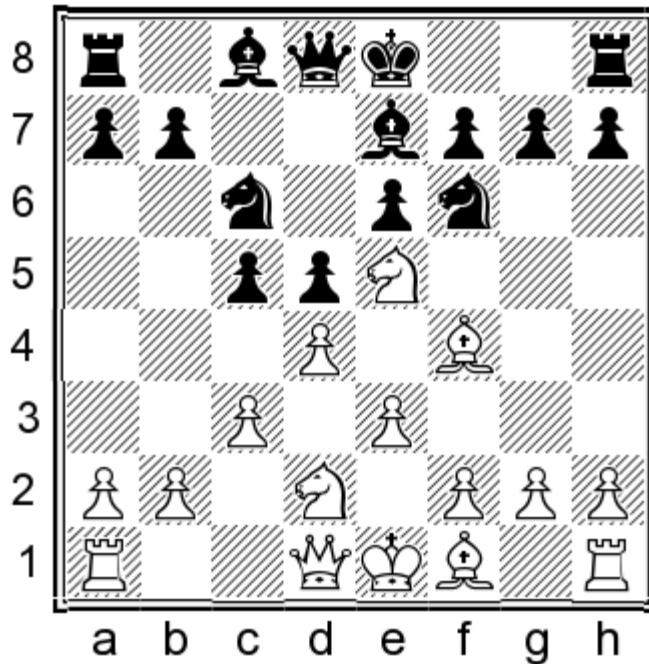
In this game Black chose a slightly passive set-up, developing the bishop on e7 instead of on d6. White reacted timely with 7.♘e5 and began a typical action against Black's king in the London System! In this game, you can see a multitude of motifs which are characteristic of our opening.

**1.d4 ♘f6**

Our move order is 1...d5 2.♙f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♘d2 e6 6.♘gf3 ♙e7 7.♘e5

2.♙f4 e6 3.e3 c5 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 d5 6.c3 ♙e7?! 7.♘e5!±

A precise move in the spirit of the position, and it was necessary to play it now to prevent ♘h5!



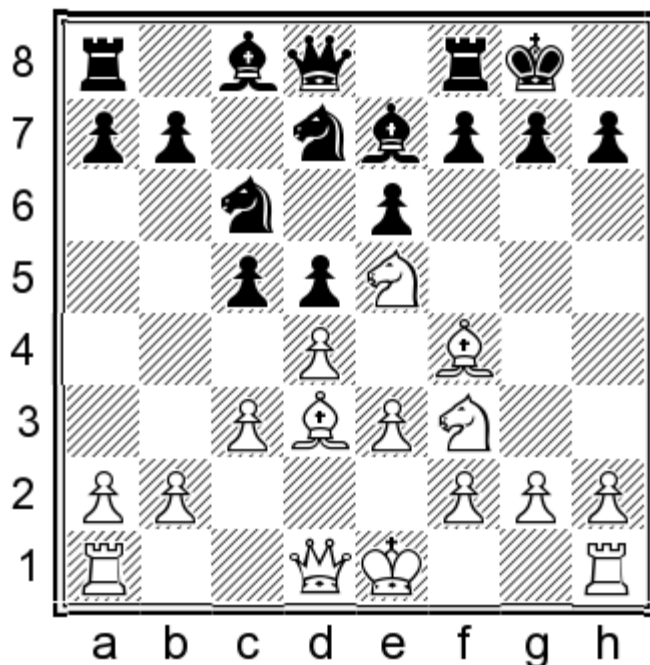
After the thematic and careless 7.♙d3?! comes 7...♘h5 8.♙e5 f6! 9.♙g3 (9.♘g5 g6 10.♘h7 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 f5 12.g4 ♙xh7 13.gxh5 ♙xh5) 9...g6∞ with a further ♘xg3.

A lukewarm move is 7.h3?! ♙d6!= and now White loses the possibility to play his typical plan with ♙g3-♘e5-f4!

**7...0-0**

Black didn't want to hurry with his reaction in the center because it doesn't look safe! Forcing continuations in the center hand White attacking possibilities. For example: 7...♘xe5 8.dxe5 ♘d7 9.h4! continuing the play on the kingside with ♙g4! If Black tries to take the poisoned pawn, than comes (9. ♙g4? g5 10. ♙g3 h5+-) 9...♙xe4 10. ♙g4 g5 11. ♙xh4! gxh4 12. ♙g7 ♙f8 13. ♙g5+-

**8.♙d3 ♘d7 9.♘df3!**



Simple and good! It very rarely happens that the typical “London” move 9.♖h5 doesn’t work well but here 9...f5 (9...g6? is a big weakening 10.♗e2→ and h4-h5 comes) and after the only consistent try 10.g4, Black has a strong answer in 10...♘f6 11.♗h3 cxd4 12.exd4 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘xg4 14.f3 ♕h4+ 15.♕g3 ♘xe5!-+

### 9...♘dx5?!

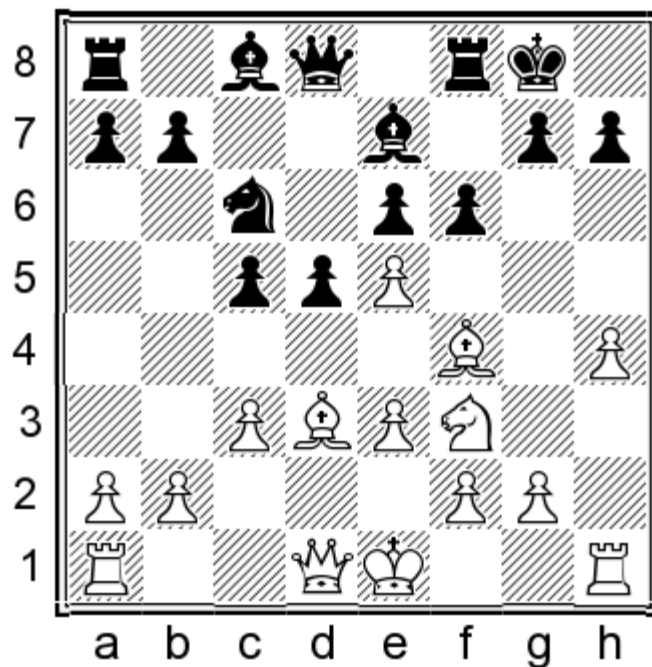
Black can’t handle the tension in the center any longer and goes for simplifications. After this move, White gains bigger attacking prospects on the kingside! Safer was 9...f6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.0-0 c4 12.♕c2 f5 making a hole on e5, but preventing e4 which is more important. 13.h3± and the White plan is to open the position with b3 at a preferable moment.

### 10.dxe5

Only in this way White keeps the initiative and attacking chances! The knight on f3 is important in attack and there was no reason to exchange him for his colleague on c6.

### 10...f5

A logical decision! Black tries to close down the diagonal and thereby kill off the dangerous bishop on d3! Too slow is 10...f6 11.h4!



This is very often one of the crucial moves for attacking in this type of position. With this move, White supports ideas with ♕h7 and ♖g5. 11...♗xe5

(After 11...fxe5? the typical sacrifice on h7 works well 12. ♕xh7+! ♖xh7 13. ♖g5+ ♖g8 14. ♗h5 ♕xg5 15. hxg5 ♗xf4 16. exf4 exf4 17. g6 ♖f8 18. ♗h8+ ♖e7 19. ♗xg7+ ♖d6 20. ♖h8 ♗g5 21. ♗f8+-)

12. ♕xe5! Here the knight is more important than the bishop! 12...fxe5 13. ♗xe5 ♗e8

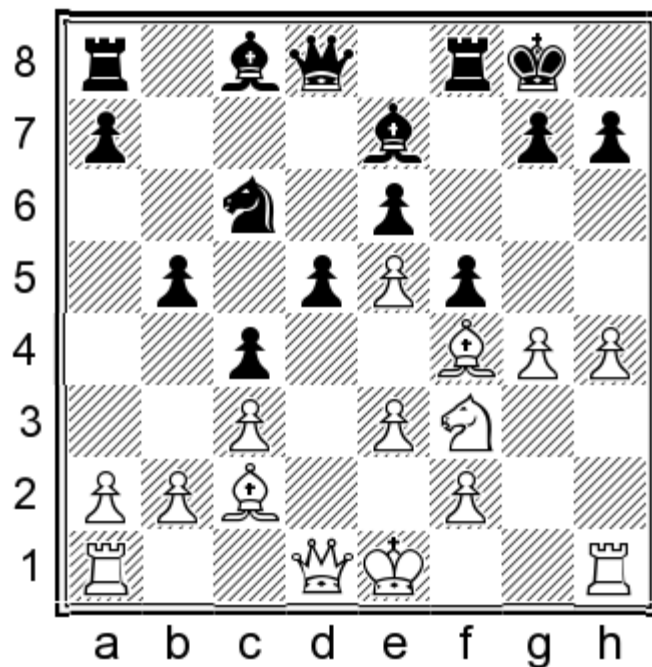
(13...♕f6 14. ♗h5 g6 15. ♗xg6 hxg6 16. ♗xg6+ ♕g7 17. ♗h7+ ♖f7 18. ♖h3+-)

14. ♗b1! in these situations it is very often important to keep the empty c2-square for the bishop! 14...♗h5 15. f4 ♕d6 16. g4 ♗h6 17. ♗d1→

### 11.h4! c4

Black gives up the d4 square but tries to create counterplay on the queenside. The break in the center with 11...d4 just makes the e6 pawn weaker 12. ♗e2±

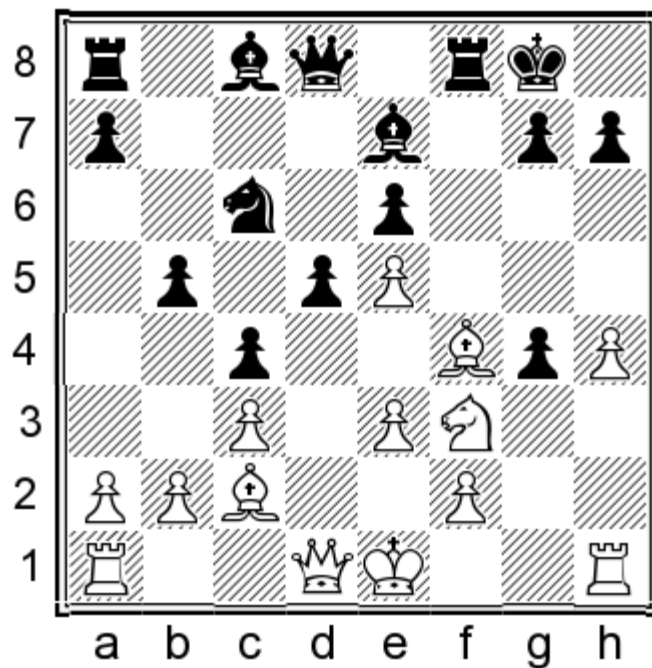
12. ♕c2 b5 13.g4!→



Everything is ready for this typical break, and White doesn't need to waste time on ♖g1!

13...b4?+-

An understandable mistake! Black was afraid to open the diagonal b1-h7 and continues with his primary plan which is too slow! The only chance for Black was to accept the challenge with 13...fxg4!



14. ♖g5

(14. ♖d4 ♖xd4 15. cxd4 h5 16. ♖g6 ♖f5±; 14. ♖h2 d4! 15. ♖e4 dxe3 16. ♖xd8 exf2+ 17. ♖xf2 ♖xd8 18. ♖xa8 ♖xf4+ 19. ♖g3 ♖f5 20. ♖xg4 h5 with a total mess!)

14... ♖xg5 15. hxg5

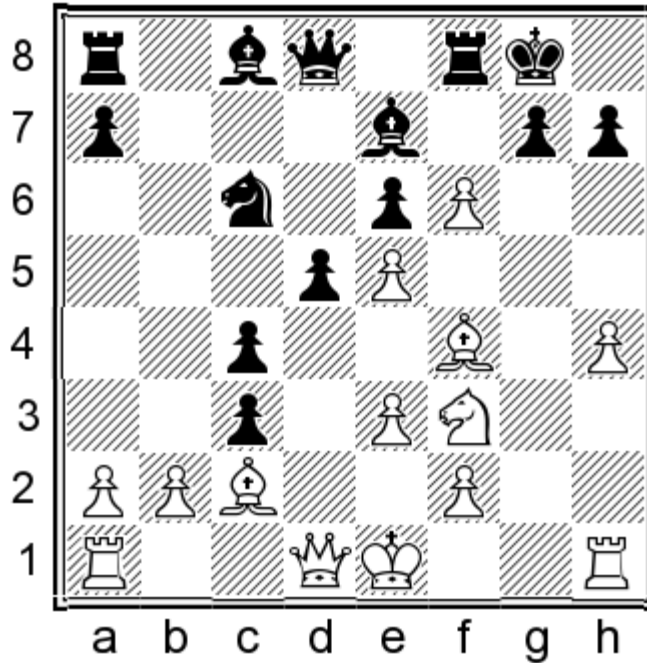
(White hasn't enough power for 15. ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 16. hxg5+ ♖g6 17. ♖xg4 ♖f7 18. ♖h7 ♖g8±) [chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

15...g6 16.♖xg4 ♜f7 17.♞h6 ♞g7 and the Black position is still difficult!

### 14.gxf5 bxc3

In a tough position Black has nothing to lose! 14...exf5 15.♙a4 ♘a5 16.♞g1±

### 15.f6



White chooses to finish the game in attacking style instead of in positional fashion. 15.bxc3 exf5 16.♙a4 ♘b8 17.♞b1 ♙e6 18.♘d4 ♜c8 19.♞g1+-

### 15...gxf6?!

And Black chooses the quickest way to lose! Somewhat better was 15...cxb2 16.♞b1 ♙xf6 17.exf6 ♜xf6 18.♞g1 ♜c3+ 19.♙f1! when Black has three pawns for a piece so the best idea is to play for attack! (It wouldn't be so easy after 19.♜d2?! ♜xd2+ 20.♙xd2 d4! 21.♙e4 c3+ 22.♙c2 ♙b7 23.♙xc6 ♙xc6 24.♘d4 ♙e4+ 25.♙xc3 ♙xb1 26.♞xb1 e5! 27.♙xe5 ♞xf2 28.♞xb2 ♞c8+ 29.♙b3 ♞xb2+ 30.♙xb2±) 19...♞xf4! 20.exf4 ♘b4 21.♘d4 ♘xc2 22.♘xc2 ♜f6 23.♞g3! ♙a6 and Black has some compensation for the rook deficit!

### 16.♘d4!

The queen joins the attack and the game is over!

### 16...cxb2

16...♘xe5 17.♙xh7+ ♙h8 18.♜h5+- or 16...♘d4 17.♙xh7+ ♙h8 18.♜h5 ♘f3+ 19.♙e2+-

### 17.♙xh7+! ♙h8 18.♜h5! bxa1=♜+ 19.♙b1+

Conclusion: With the passive 6...♙e7 Black gives up the fight for the e5 square and allows an easier attack for White. One of the crucial ideas and moves in this game was 10.dxe5 and 11.h4! which you need to remember!

**E. Prie — A. Dgebuadze**

Condom op, 16.07.2012

In comparison with the previous game, Black chose 7...♞e7 instead of 7...♞g3 with the idea ...e5! After White's typical reaction 8.♘e5, he chose a dubious plan giving up the dark-square bishop which was the later cause of his weak dark squares. In the game White had only to choose the right moment to ruin the center with c4, getting to the weak square d6! After that the game was soon finished.

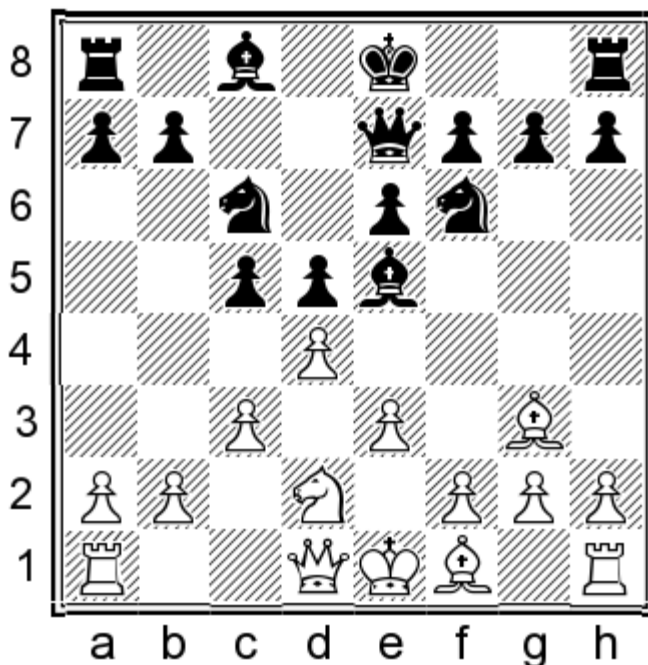
1.d4 d5 2.♞f4 c5 3.e3 ♘c6 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♘d2 e6 6.♘gf3 ♞d6 7.♞g3 ♞e7

The idea is ...e5!

8.♘e5

A typical way to prevent ...e5! 8.♞b5!? is always interesting, with the same idea. After 8...a6? comes 9.♞xc6+ bxc6 10.♞a4 ♞d7 11.♞xd6 ♞xd6 12.♞a3!±

8...♞xe5?!±



This decision is not fully justified. After this move, the dark squares in Black's position will become weak, especially the d6 square at some point! Black has a better choice here, one which we will see in the next games! 8...♘d7 9.♞b5!

8...0-0! 9.♞d3

9.dxe5 ♘d7 10.f4 f5

This move has two ideas; blockading the center and preventing e4!

11.♘f3

With 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♞b5 0-0 13.0-0 ♞d7± Black gains a little 'release'. It was too early for 11.c4 d4 (11... ♘b6

12.cxd5 ♖xd5 13. ♗c4 0-0 14. ♕d2±) 12.exd4 cxd4 (12... ♗xd4 13. ♗f3 ♗xf3+ 14. ♕xf3±) 13.a3 a5 14. ♗f3 ♗c5±

### 11...h6

Directed against ♗h4-♗g5

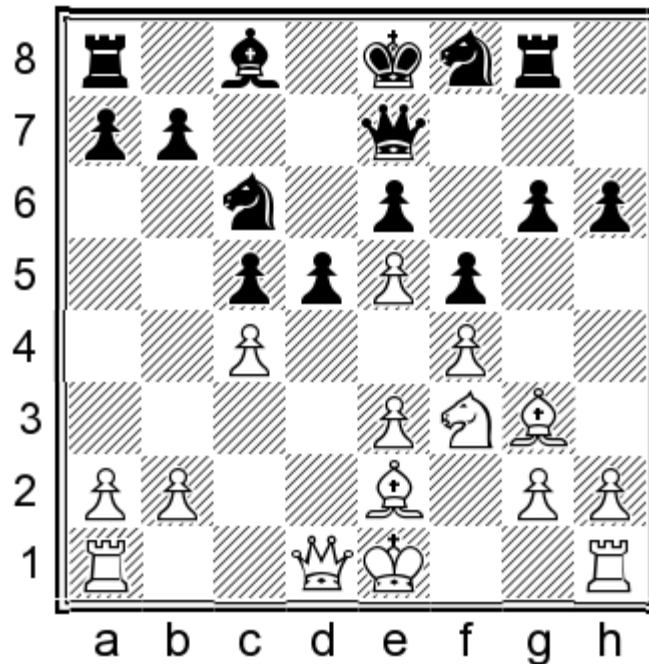
### 12. ♗h4!

Forcing Black into passive play! Still not working is 12.c4 ♗b6 13.b3 g5±

### 12...♗f8 13. ♗e2 g6?!

Black shouldn't worry too much about ♗h5! Bigger hopes arise from 13...g5!? 14. ♗h5+ ♖d8 15. ♗f3 ♖c7 16.0-0 b6± but here also the black king is not so safe after a subsequent b4!

### 14. ♗f3 ♖g8 15.c4!



Now is the right moment because the ♗f8 is far from the d5 square!

### 15...♕d7 16.0-0!

I suppose White didn't want to hurry with 16.cxd5 because he didn't want to give a spot for the knight on e6, but in that case also White would have a clear advantage! 16...exd5 17. ♕d2 ♗e6 18. ♖d1 ♗e7 19.0-0 b6 20.b4±

### 16...b6

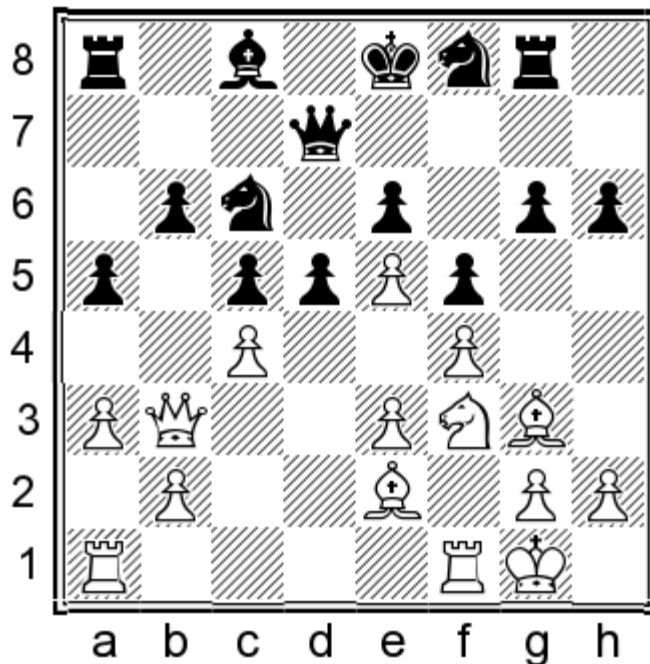
In case of 16...dxc4 White would swoop into the point d6! 17. ♗d2 ♗a5 (17...b5 18.a4±) 18. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 19. ♗xc4 ♕xd1 20. ♖fxd1 ♗d7 21. ♖d6±

### 17.a3 a5?

Weakening the b6 pawn! More resistant was 17...dxc4 18. ♗d2 ♗a5 19. ♕c2 ♗a6 (19... ♗b7 20. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 21. ♗xc4 ♗e4 22. ♕e2 0-0-0 23. ♖fd1 ♕e7 24. ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 25. ♖d1 ♕e7 26. ♖d6±) 20. ♖fd1 ♕c7 21. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 22. ♗xc4 ♗xc4

23. ♖xc4 ♜d8 24. ♖a4+ ♜d7 25. b4±

18. ♖b3+–



18... ♖c7

Black gives up a pawn to avoid a complete strategic wreck! 18... ♖b8 19. cxd5 exd5 20. ♖fd1 c4 21. ♖c3 ♜a6 22. ♖d2 ♜e7 23. ♜h4+–

19. cxd5 a4

With this intermediate move Black gets the b3 square, but he will not find a lasting benefit from it.

20. ♖d1 exd5 21. ♖xd5 ♜e6 22. ♖d2 ♜b3 23. ♖c3!

Making a route for the knight: d2-c4-d6!

23... ♜e6 24. ♜d2 ♜a5 25. ♜xb3

The last piece which still kept the position together is now killed off.

25... axb3 26. ♖ad1 ♜d8 27. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 28. ♖d1+ ♜e7 29. ♜h4+!

With the idea to open up the black king even more.

29... g5 30. fxg5 hxg5 31. ♜g3 c4 32. h4! g4 33. ♖f1 ♜g7

33... ♖f8 34. h5+– and next comes ♜h4!

34. e4 ♖f8 35. e6

1–0

## Lessons to be learned:

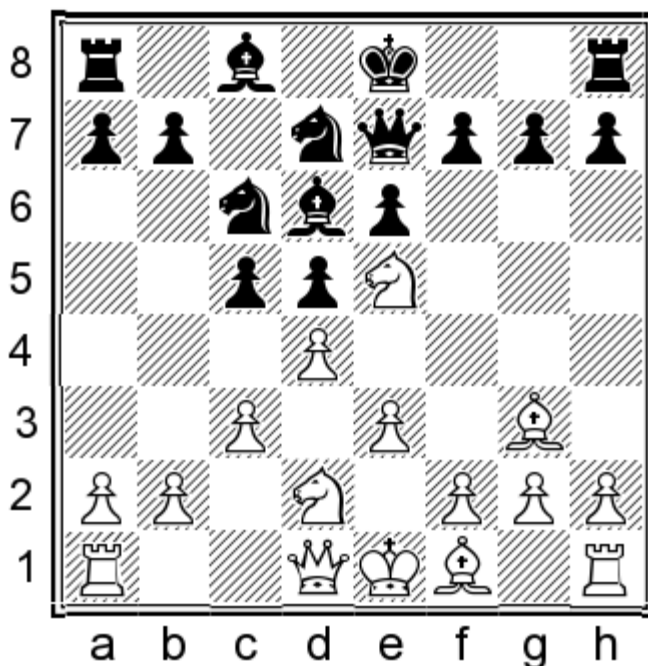
1. Don't forget to play 8. ♖e5 after 7... ♗e7, making a Stonewall position. Don't allow ...e5 after which Black solves his problems.
2. The reaction 8... ♗e5?! Is a positional mistake and the dark squares will be weak. Attack the center with c4 at a suitable moment, and by opening the d-file you target the weak square d6.

**E. Prie — Y. Gozzoli**

FRA-ch Accession, 24.08.2012

This game reminds one a lot of the previous game, with the difference being 8... ♗d7 instead of giving up the dark-squared bishop with 8... ♗e5?! White reacted in the strongest way with 9. ♗b5! forcing Black into ... ♗xe5. Actually the difference is in White's bishop placed on b5. The critical moment in the game was 12... f5? instead of 12... f6! This faulty decision left Black without counterplay and White used that with the typical plan of ♖g1–g4 building up an attack on the Black king.

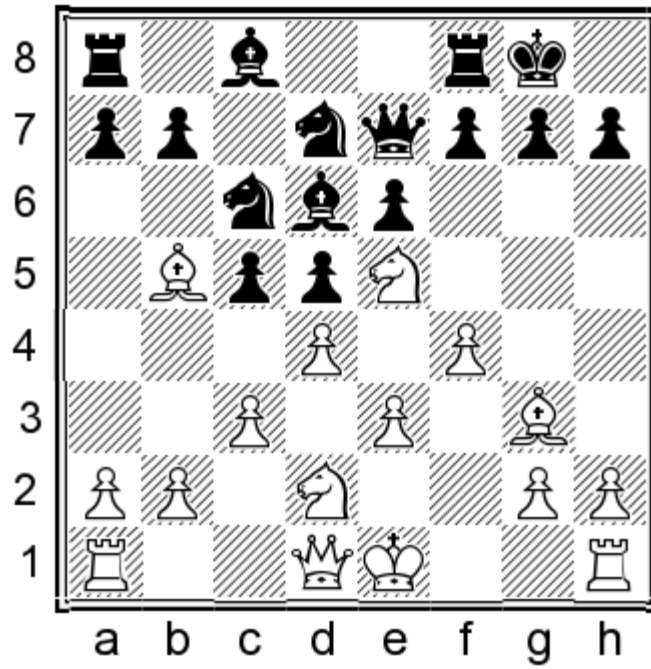
1. d4 d5 2. ♗f4 c5 3. e3 ♗c6 4. c3 ♗f6 5. ♗d2 e6 6. ♗gf3 ♗d6 7. ♗g3 ♗e7 8. ♗e5 ♗d7



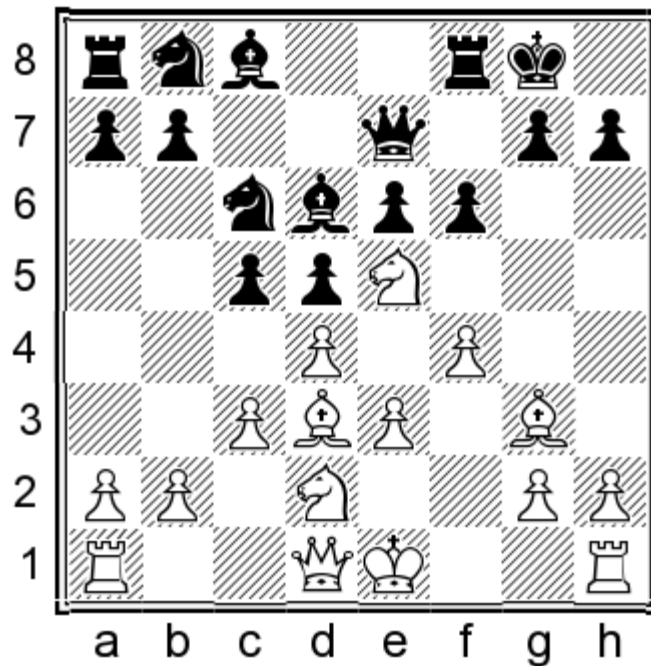
The idea is to play ...f6 after castling!

**9. ♗b5!**

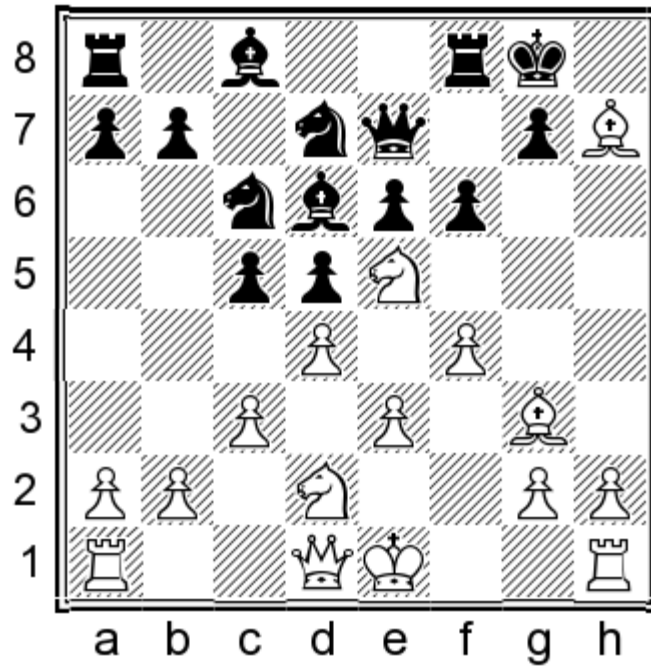
Forcing Black into ... ♗xe5! The most-played move in this position is 9. f4 0-0 10. ♗d3 (Just once was there played 10. ♗b5!?)



which deserves serious attention! 10...♖db8 (10...♖dxe5 11.fxe5 ♘c7 12.♗f3±) 11.♙d3 f5 (11...f6



12.♗g6! hxg6 13.♙xg6 ♜f7 14.♜h5 ♜e8 15.f5 e5 16.e4!+- cxd4 17.exd5 dxc3 18.♗e4 cxb2 19.♙xf7+ ♜xf7  
 20.♜xf7+ ♗xf7 21.♗xd6+ ♗f8 22.♜b1+-) 12.♗df3 ♗d7 13.♙h4± Kovic D.-Kanep M. Dresden ol 2008. White has  
 achieved what he wanted. The knight remains on e5 and now White has the clear plan of ♜g1-g4!) 10...f6 11.♙h4  
 (Now 11.♙xh7+



is not so dangerous 11... ♔xh7 12. ♚h5+ ♔g8 13. ♘g6 ♚e8∞ with next ♘e7)  
 11... ♚e8 12. ♘xc6 bxc6.

### 9... ♘xe5

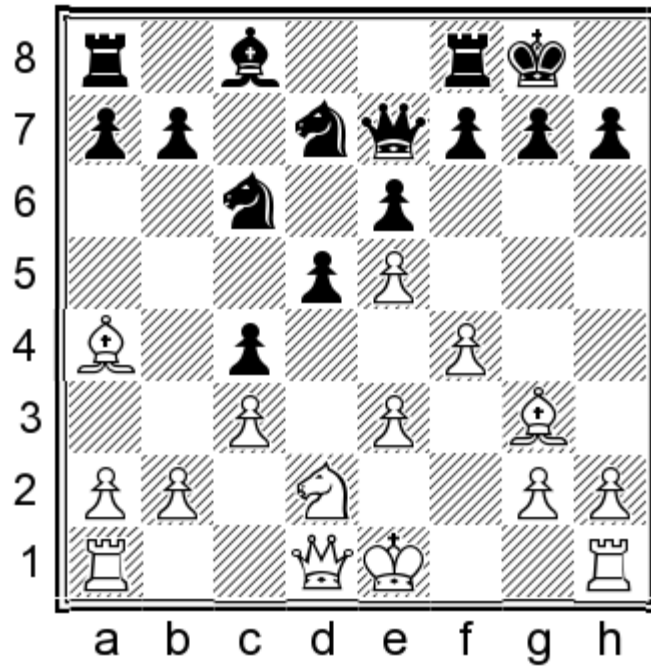
By giving up the bishop pair, Black doesn't waste time. For example 9... ♘db8 10. ♘xc6+!? bxc6 (10... ♘xc6 11. ♘xc6 bxc6 12. ♚a4 ♘d7 13. ♘xd6 ♚xd6 14. ♚a3±) 11. ♚a4 ♘b7 12. ♘d3± and the knight is coming to c5!

Or 9... ♘dxe5 10. dxe5 ♘c7 11. ♚g4! ♚f8 (11... 0-0 12. ♘h4 ♘xe5 13. ♘xe7 ♘xg4 14. ♘xc5! ♚d8 15. ♘e7+-) 12. ♘xc6+ bxc6 13. ♚a4 ♘d7 14. c4± with the well-known idea ♚c1-♘b3 and the c5 pawn is doomed.

### 10.dxe5 0-0 11.f4 c4

Black gives up the d4 square, seeking counterplay with ...♘c5.

### 12. ♘a4!



It's necessary to preserve the bishop and use him in action on the kingside!

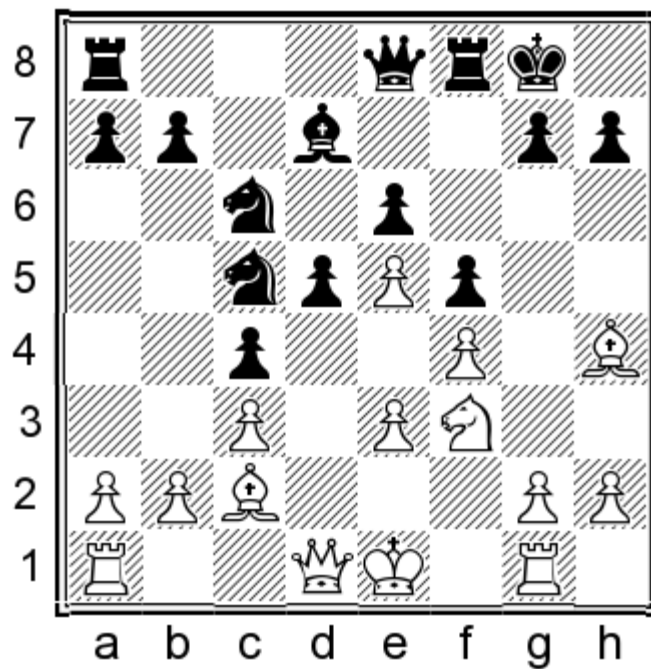
**12...f5?**

With this move Black has capitulated! He had to search counterplay with 12...f6! 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.0-0 ♘d7 15.♗h4 ♗e8± activating the bishop.

**13.♗f3**

13.exf6 — transposes to 12...f6

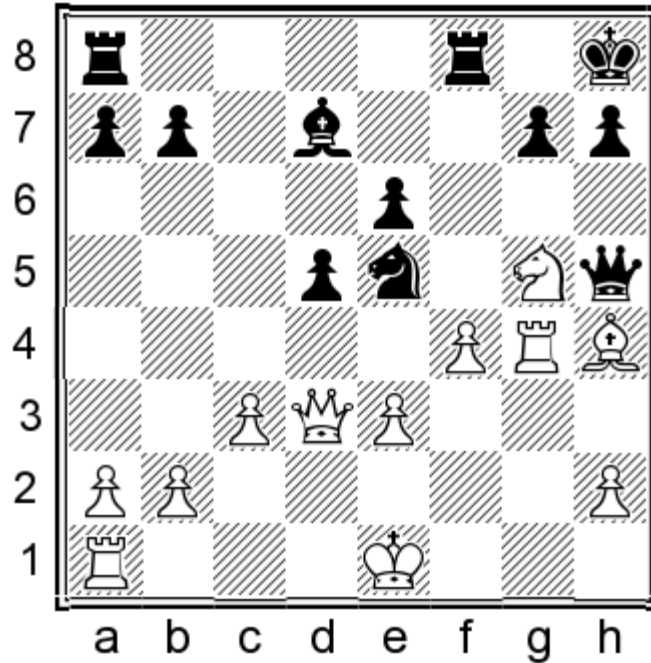
**13...♗c5 14.♗h4 ♖e8 15.♗c2 ♘d7 16.♖g1!±**



Black can't prevent g4 next, after which the diagonal and g-file opens to his monarch.

**16...♙h8 17.g4 fxg4 18.♘g5!**

An important move! White is going to take the pawn with queen! After 18.♞xg4? things start to become complicated: 18...♞h5 and now 19.♘g5 doesn't work because of 19...♘d3+ 20.♙xd3 cxd3 21.♞xd3 ♘xe5!



22.fxe5 ♙b5! ♠ A nice deflection!

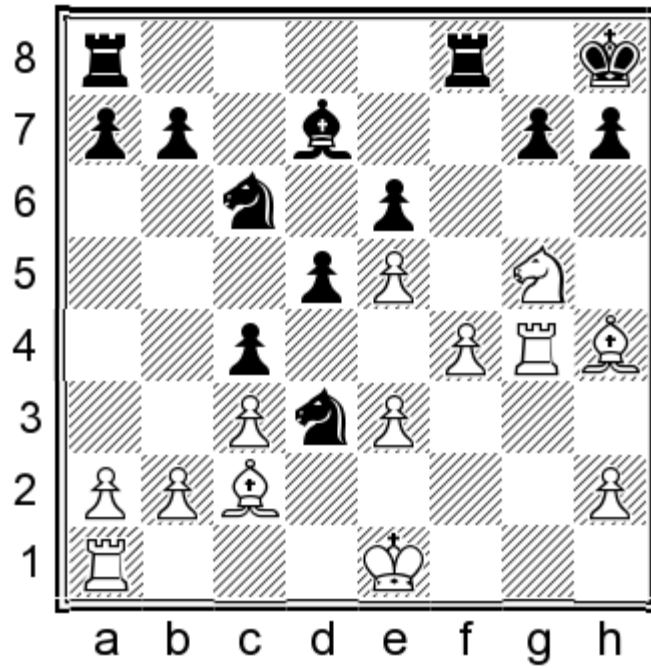
**18...♞h5**

The toughest defence was 18...♘d3+!? 19.♙xd3 cxd3 20.♞xg4 ♞g6 21.♘h3 ♙e8 22.♘f2 ♞xg4 23.♞xg4 ♙g6 24.♘d2±; 18...h6 19.♞xg4 hxg5 20.♙xg5 ♘d3+ 21.♙xd3 cxd3 22.♙f6+—

**19.♞xg4 ♞xg4 20.♞xg4**

Although it can now be considered an endgame, White's attack continues.

**20...♘d3+**



Black was more-or-less forced into this. 20...h6 21.♘h7 ♖g8 (21...♖f5 22.♘f6+-) 22.♘f6! ♖gf8 23.♙d2! gxf6 24.♙xf6+ ♖xf6 25.exf6 e5 26.♖g6! e4 27.♖ag1 ♙h7 28.♖g7+ ♙h8 29.♖1g6+- or 20...g6 21.♖g3!± with ♖h3 next.

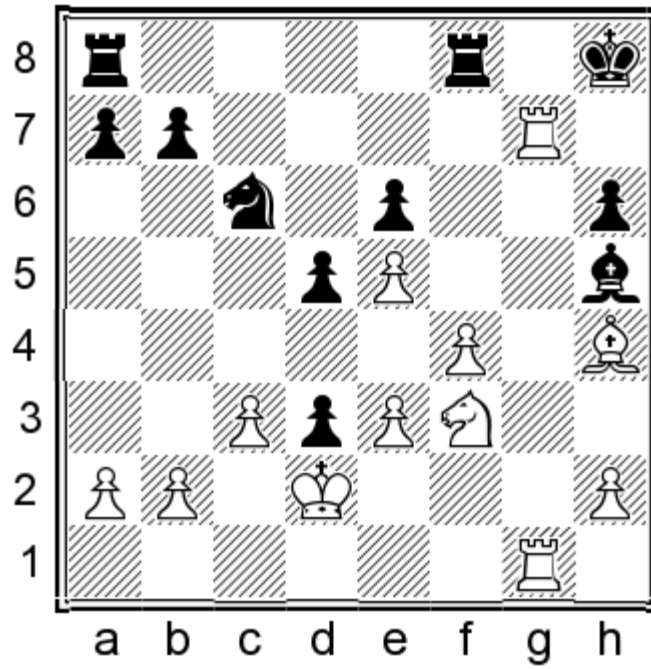
**21.♙xd3 cxd3 22.♙d2 h6**

Releasing the bishop from defending the e6 pawn.

**23.♘f3 ♙e8 24.♖ag1 ♙h5**

Black was unable to defend the pawn 24...♖f7 25.♖xg7! ♖xg7 26.♙f6+- or 24...g5 25.♘xg5! hxg5 26.♙xg5 ♙g6 27.♙f6+ ♖xf6 28.exf6 ♙h7 29.♖h4+- with ♖g7 next, and if Black continues with 29...♖g8 then winning is 30.♖xg8+ ♙xg8 31.f7++-

**25.♖xg7!+-**

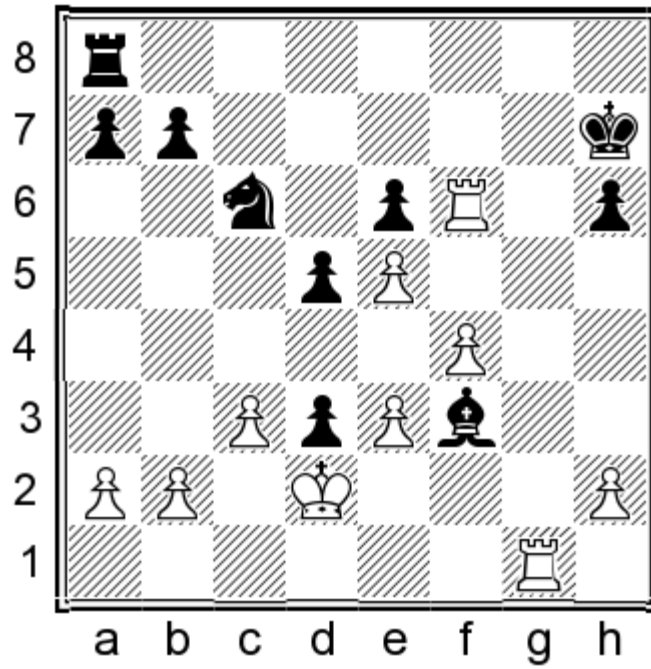


The final punch! Black's king is helpless!

25...♙xf3 26.♖7g6 ♔h7 27.♙f6 ♖xf6

Avoiding a 'mill'! 27...♖f7 28.♖g7+ ♖xg7 29.♖xg7+ ♔h8 30.♖g3+ ♔h7 31.♖xf3 ♖g8 32.♔xd3 ♖g2 33.♖g3! ♖xg3 34.hxg3 ♔g6 35.e4 dxe4+ 36.♔xe4+-

28.♖xf6



There is little comfort for Black in his minimal material advantage in view of his coordination and king position.

28...♙e4 29.♖xe6

The central pawns are unstoppable now! Black's knight is cut off and cannot help!

29...♖d8 30.♖f6 ♖d7 31.e6 ♖e7 32.♖g3

More convincing was 32.♖f7+! ♗h8 33.♖f8+ ♗h7 34.f5 ♘e5 35.f6 ♘c4+ 36.♗e1 d2+ 37.♗e2+-

32...b5

32...♘d8 33.f5+-

33.b3?!

Perhaps the final move has been wrongly entered into the database?

1-0

### Lessons to be learned:

1. with 9.♗b5! you are forcing ...♗xe5
2. after 11...c4 don't forget the bishop retreat ♗a4-♗c2; you need to keep the bishop for the attack!
3. if Black closes the position in the center with ...f5, you build an attack with ♖g1-g4

### G. Kamsky (2709) — S. L. Shankland (2611)

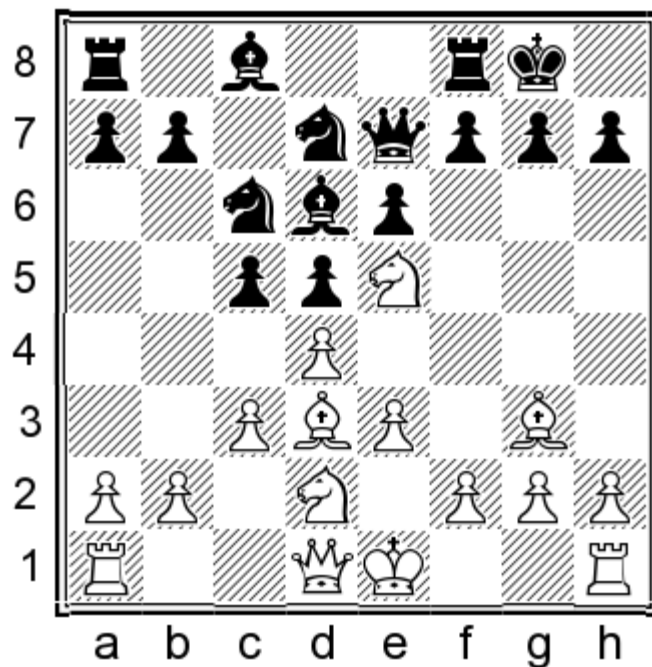
Eastern Class 23rd Sturbridge (4), 16.03.2014

Here is another one of the most important lines! Black chooses a very natural classical set-up with ...♗d6-...♖e7-...0-0, with the further idea ...♘d7-f6, removing the always unpleasant knight from e5! After 10.♘d7 the critical moment came, where Black reacted badly with 10...♗d7? which leads almost to a loss after a “modified” thematic bishop sacrifice on h7. In view that this game is relatively new, it's a little bit strange how the strong GM from USA was not informed about this trap in the opening. It shows that many strong players still don't take the “London System” seriously. It's interesting to say, but I have known this trap for almost 10 years and I had it in my notes. Unfortunately I still haven't had a chance to use it in an official game. Try to memorise this game to the end because you need to play very precisely!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f4 d5 3.e3 e6 4.♘d2 c5 5.c3 ♘c6 6.♘gf3 ♗d6 7.♗g3 0-0 8.♗d3 ♖e7 9.♘e5

Never forget about this move, needed to prevent e5!

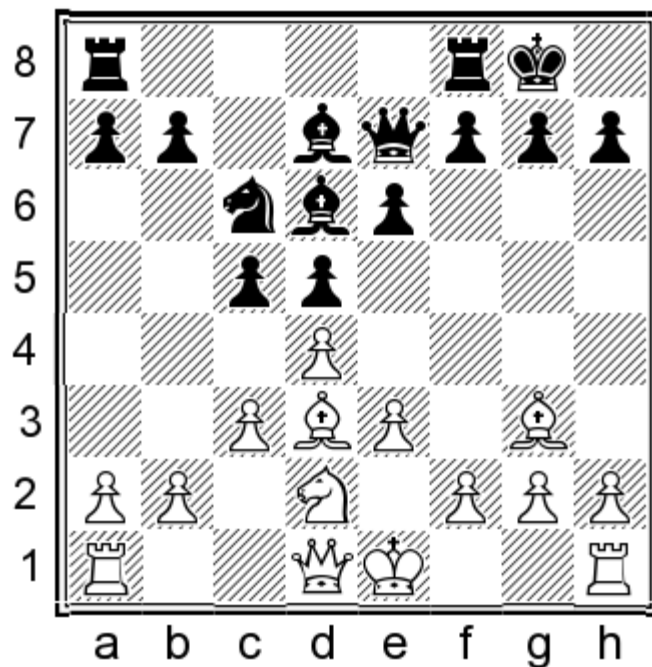
9...♘d7



10. ♖xd7!

The best move after which the critical position arises! After the typical 10.f4 Black can play 10...f6 without negative consequences because 11. ♗xh7+ doesn't work for white 11... ♔xh7 12. ♕h5+ ♔g8 13. ♘g6 ♖e8 14. f5 ♗xg3+ 15. hxg3 exf5 16. 0-0-0 ♘e7! 17. ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 18. ♖xf5 ♘b6 19. ♖h7+ ♔f7 20. ♖h5+ ♔g6 21. ♖h7+ ♔e8 22. ♖xg6+ ♖f7

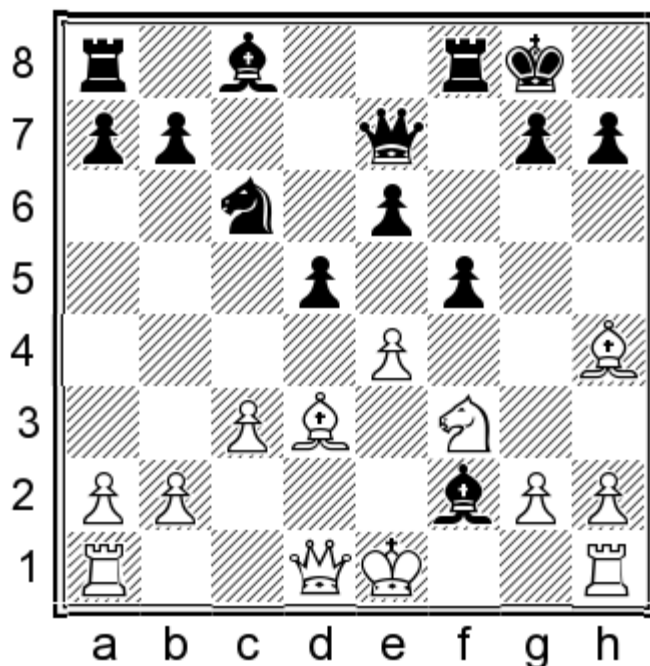
10... ♗xd7?



A bad move after which Black loses a pawn, but who can assume that something is hidden here? The only move is 10... ♖xd7! 11. 0-0

(Polish GM Heberla continued with 11.dxc5 but there followed some unexpected counterplay from Black 11... ♗xc5

12. ♖f3 ♜e7 13. e4 f5! 14. ♗h4 Heberla-Zajic Plovdiv 2015. and here Black missed the nice tactic 14... ♗xf2+!



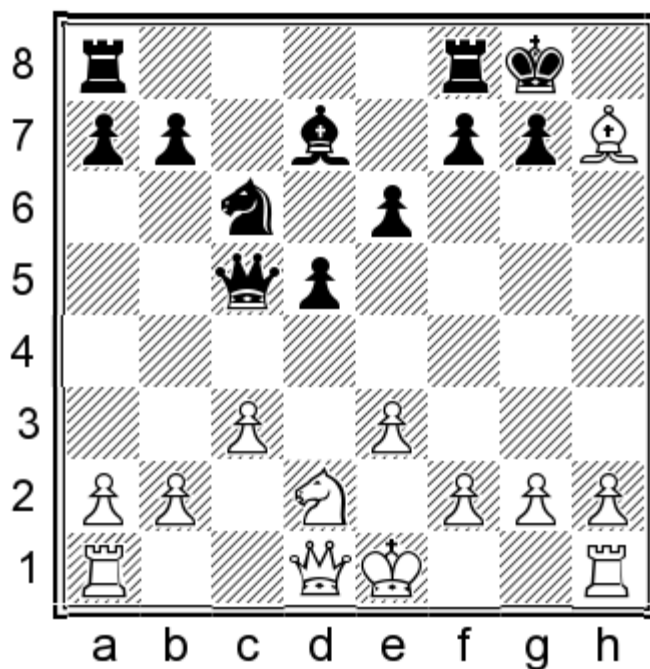
15. ♖xf2 ♜c5+ 16. ♖e1 fxe4+; 11. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 12. dxc5 ♜xc5 13. ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 14. ♜h5+ ♖g8 15. ♗e4 g6 16. ♜g5 ♜e7 17. ♗f6+ ♖g7 18. ♗h5+ ♖h7 19. ♗f6+ ♖g7= in this line you can see the pluses of having the bishop on c8 instead of on d7 as in the game.)

11...b6 12. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 13. f4± with a typical London position without the bad bishop.

### 11. ♗xd6

Now comes a couple of forced moves.

11... ♜xd6 12. dxc5 ♜xc5 13. ♗xh7+!+-



This modified thematic sacrifice works very nicely here! The knight comes into the attack with tempo via e4!

**13...♙xh7 14.♚h5+ ♙g8 15.♘e4! ♚c4**

Now after 15...g6 the bishop is hanging on d7 16.♘xc5 gxh5 17.♘d7+– and another pawn on h5 will also fall!

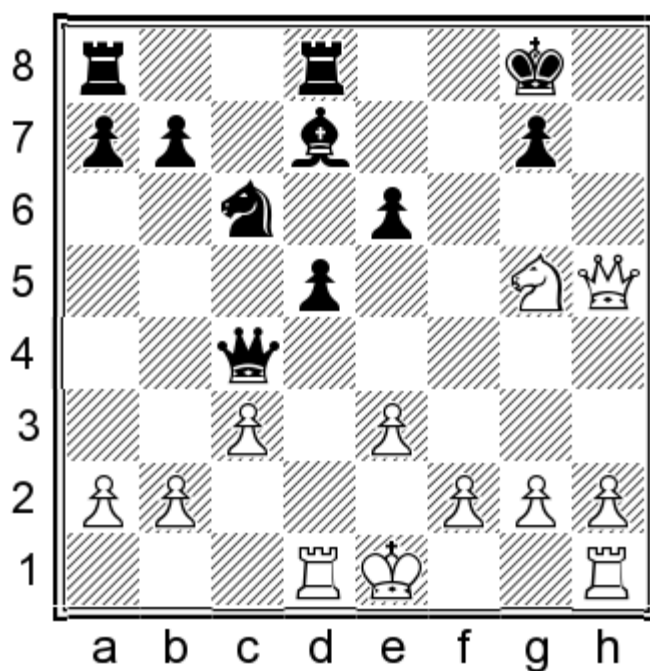
**16.♘g5 ♜fd8**

After 16...♚d3 White cuts off the diagonal after 17.e4! ♜fd8 18.♚xf7+ ♙h8 19.♞d1+–

**17.♚xf7+ ♙h8 18.♚h5+!**

An important check against ...♚h4!

**18...♙g8 19.♞d1!**



A crucial move. With this move White doesn't allow ...♚d3.

**19...e5**

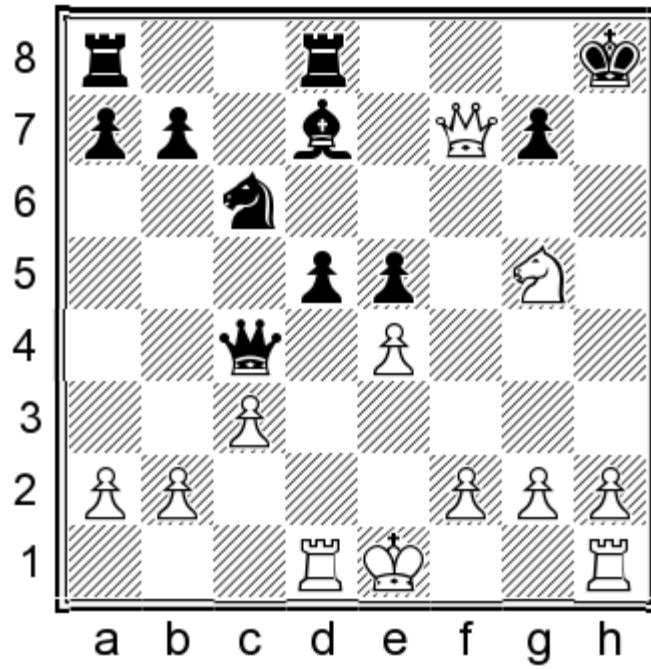
The idea is ...♚g4. 19...♙e8 loses by force 20.♚h7+ ♙f8 21.♚h8+ ♙e7 22.♚xg7+ ♙d6 23.b3! ♚h4 24.g3 ♚g4 (24... ♚h5 25.♘e4#) 25.♘f7+ ♙xf7 26.♚xg4+–

Black can't cover the f7 square because the rook enters the attack 19...♘e5 20.♞d4!+–

**20.♚f7+**

A precise move! 20.♚h7+?! ♙f8 21.♚h8+ ♙e7 22.♚xg7+ ♙d6 and Black's king runs away.

**20...♙h8 21.e4!**

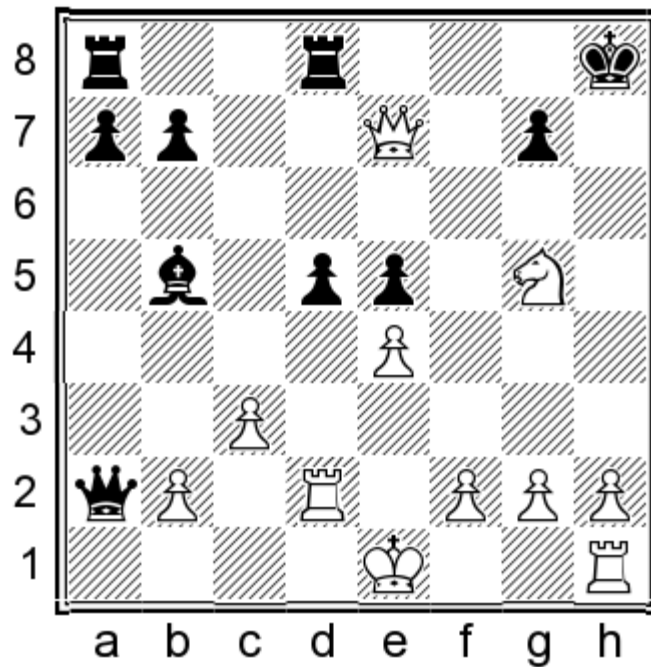


White cuts off the 4th rank with the main idea being to prevent ...♔h4!

21...♘e7!?

Black finds the only way to prolong the surrender. 21...♙g4 does not bring safety after 22.f3 ♖c5 23.♗g6! ♔e3+ 24.♔f1 ♔g8 25.♗h7+ ♔f8 26.♗h8+ ♔e7 27.♗xg7+ ♔d6 28.♙xd5#

22.♗xe7 ♙b5 23.♙d2 23...♗xa2



Although the white king doesn't look safe, Black cannot endanger him. 23...d4 24.♗xe5 dxc3 25.♗xc3 ♗xc3 (25... ♗xa2 26. ♗h3+ ♔g8 27. ♗h7+ ♔f8 28. ♗f5+ ♔g8 29. ♗xb5 ♗b1+ 30. ♔e2 ♙xd2+ 31. ♔xd2 ♙d8+ 32. ♔e3 ♗xh1 33. ♗b3+ ♔h8 34. ♔f7+-) 26.bxc3 ♙xd2 27.♔xd2 ♙d8+ 28.♔c1 ♙d3 29.♔c2+-

24. ♖f7!+-

and Black doesn't have a defence against ♖h5 with the further hunting of the Black king. The rest of the game is very clear and without any comments, because everything was forced.

24... ♖a1+ 25. ♖d1 ♖xb2 26. ♖h5+ ♔g8 27. ♖h7+ ♔f8 28. ♖h8+ ♔e7 29. ♖xg7+ ♔d6 30. ♖xd5+ ♔c6 31. ♖f6+

Conclusion: Black walked into an opening trap by taking 10... ♗d7? after which he lost to very precise moves! You have to memorise many crucial moves in leading the attack.

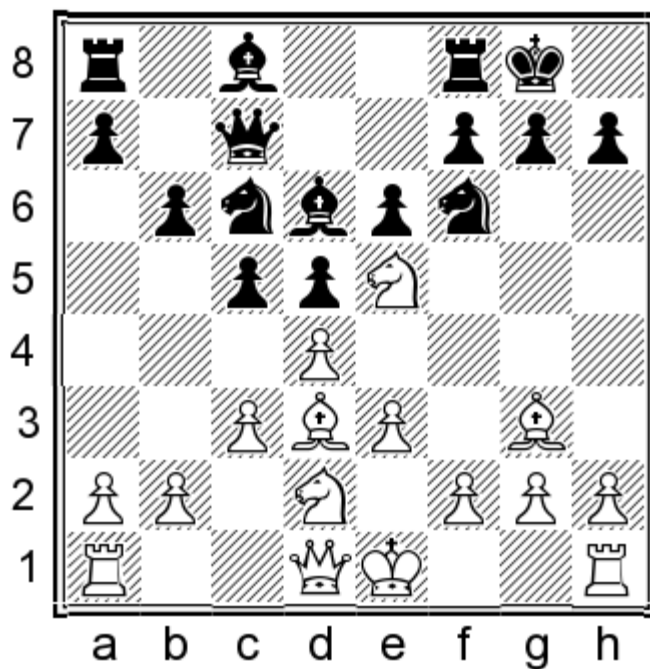
1-0

N. Sedlak (2538) — G.Sargissian (2693)

SRB-chT Valjevo (3.4), 19.09.2012

In the classical set-up with ...e6 and a further ...0-0-...b6, my reputable opponent made an inaccurate move 9... ♖c7?! which allowed me to introduce the typical plan for the London System. By exchanging my dark-squared bishop for a knight, I obtained nice prospects on the kingside, which I then used in the thematic way with g4!

1.d4 d5 2. ♗f4 ♗f6 3.e3 e6 4. ♗d2 c5 5.c3 ♗c6 6. ♗gf3 ♗d6 7. ♗g3 0-0 8. ♗d3 b6 9. ♗e5 ♖c7?!



Not the best move. The main and the best move nowadays is 9... ♗b7 and after 10.f4 ♗e7! with the idea to take the e4 square under control.

10.f4 ♗e7

Black had a similar idea but here there is a big difference.

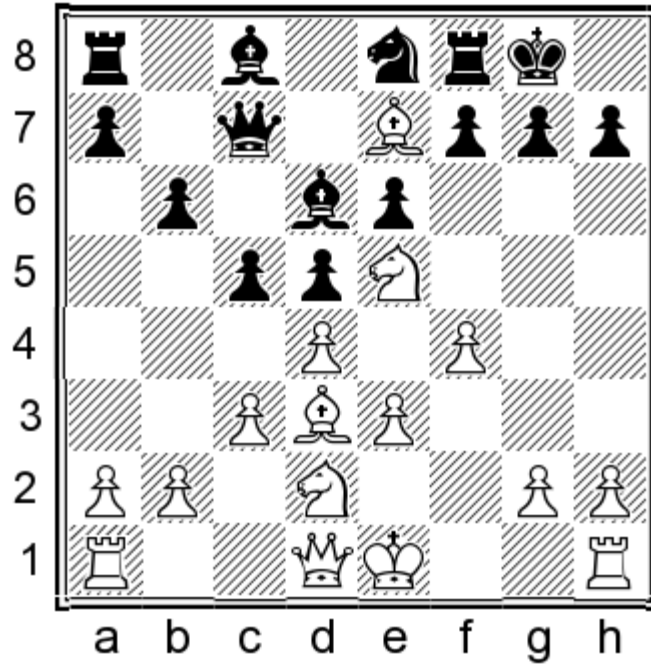
11. ♗h4!

Now Black doesn't have ... ♗e4.

11...♖e8

11...♖f5 12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.♘g4 ♔g7 14.0-0 h5 15.e4

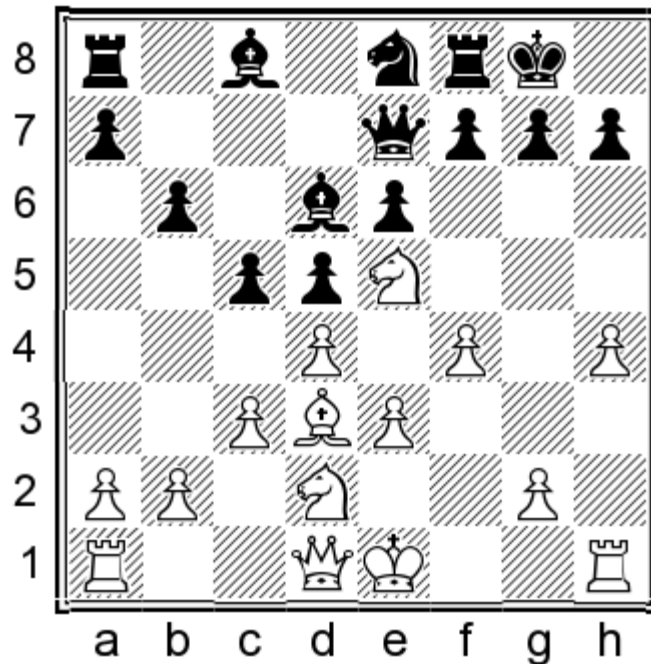
12.♙xe7±



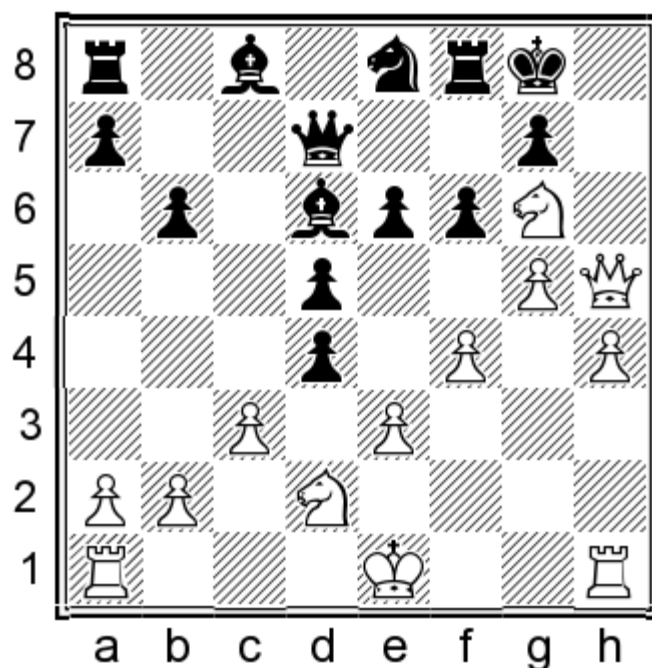
A logical decision, otherwise ...♖f5 or ...f6 is coming. 12.♙h5 ♖f5 13.g4 g6+

12...♙xe7

If Black takes 12...♙xe7 White has an attractive option in 13.h4!



A nice prophylactic move with a hidden idea against ...f6 (13.♙h5 is not the best in this position because Black can play 13...g6∞ with f6 next.) 13...f6 14.♙xh7+! ♔xh7 15.♙h5+ ♔g8 16.♘g6 ♙d7 17.g4! cxd4 18.g5!



The idea is  $\text{♞e7}$  with next  $\text{g6!}$   $18...fxg5$   $19.\text{♞f3}$  and White has a decisive attack.

### 13. $\text{♜h5! f5}$

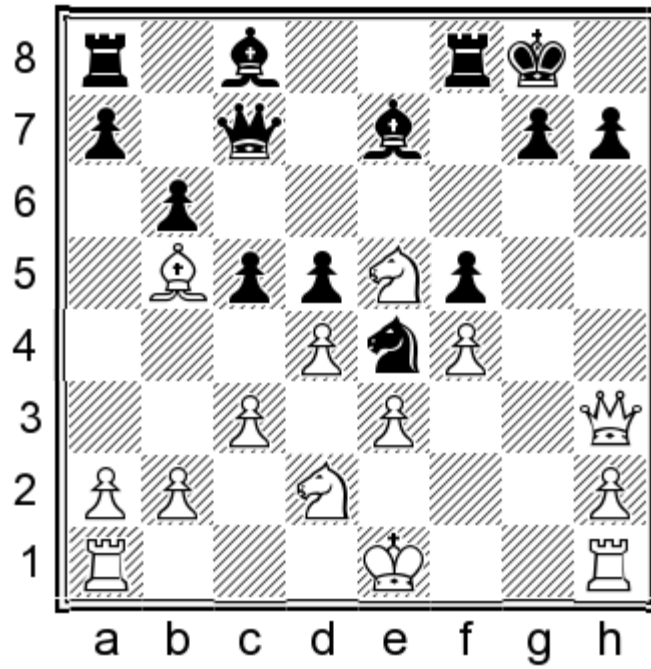
Closing down the d3 bishop but allowing an opening of the g-file. Also logical was  $13...♞f6$   $14.\text{♜h3 ♘b7}$   $15.g4 ♞e4$  but after  $16.g5$ →, it's not clear how Black should continue. The knight is pinned because of the mate threat on h7 and White can simply build his attack with  $\text{♞g1-♞g4}$  with many threats.

$13...g6$  weakening his own position in front of the king  $14.\text{♜e2 f6}$   $15.\text{♞ef3±}$  and now White has new targets in Black's position. The next move could be h4.

### 14.g4! $\text{♞f6}$ 15. $\text{♜h3 ♞e4}$ 16.gxf5

White has done a good job. The knight on e5 is alive, the important g-file is open and the d5 pawn in Black's position has become very weak.

### 16...exf5 17. $\text{♞b5!}$

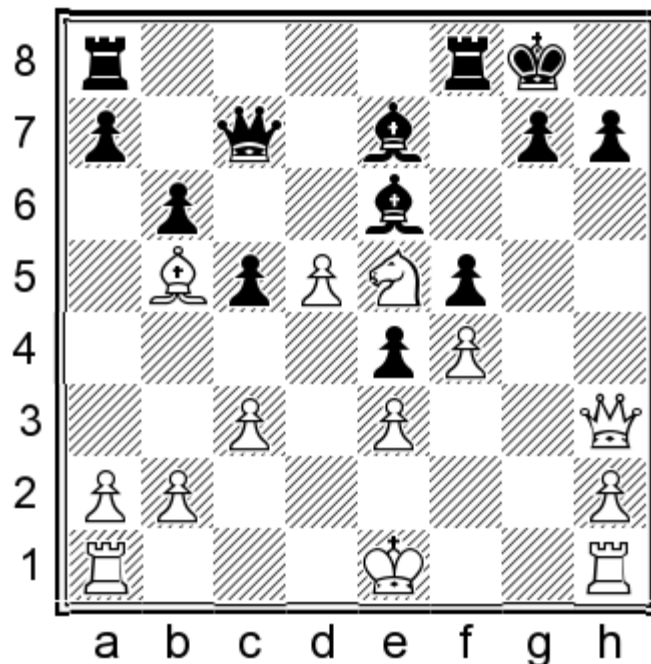


A move with a double idea. The first is to play  $\text{♙c6}$  and the second is to move the bishop from d3 to threaten also  $\text{♜e4}$  sometimes.

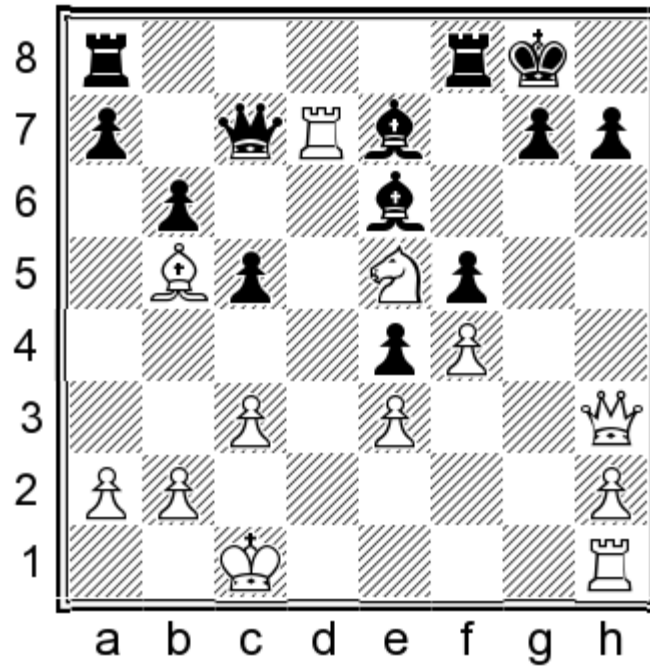
### 17...♙d6?!

In an unpleasant position Black doesn't find the best defense. The queen was well-placed on c7 from which she defends her king well. The best defence was 17...♙d6 and then White can use a tactical possibility to achieve a small plus by exchanging the inactive knight from d2 18.♜dc4! (18.♙c6 ♙b7 19.♙d7 ♙c8=) 18...♙xe5 (18...dxc4 19.♙xc4+ ♖h8 20.♜g6#) 19.♜xe5 cxd4 20.exd4 a6 21.♙d3 ♖f6 22.♖g1 ♙e6± although White's pieces stand well, it's not easy to crush the black position. For example: 23.♖g2 ♖h8 24.0-0-0 ♖h6 25.♙f3 b5 26.♙dg1 ♖g8 and somehow Black is still in the game.

Of course Black saw the trick after 17...♙e6 18.♜xe4 dxe4 19.d5!



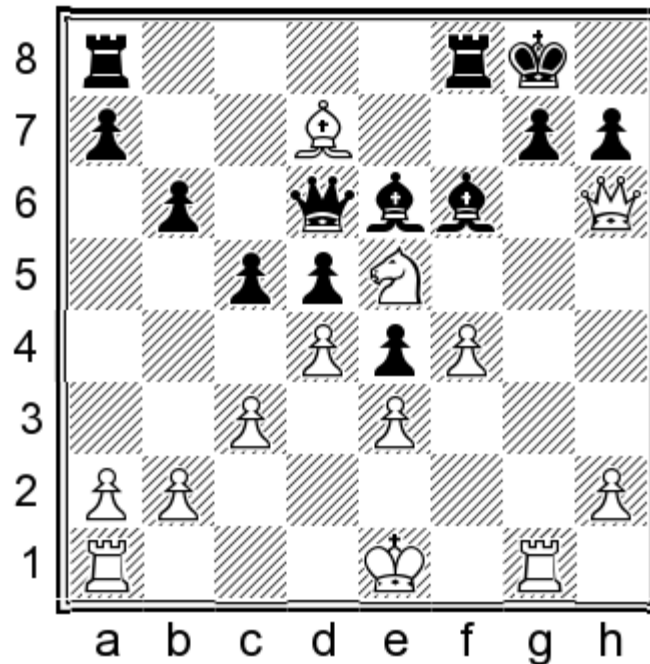
White opens the d-file for further blows! 19...♙xd5 20.0-0-0 ♕e6 (20...♖ad8 21.♖xd5 ♖xd5 22.♙c4+-) 21.♖d7!



21...♙xd7 22.♙c4+ ♔h8 23.♘g6#

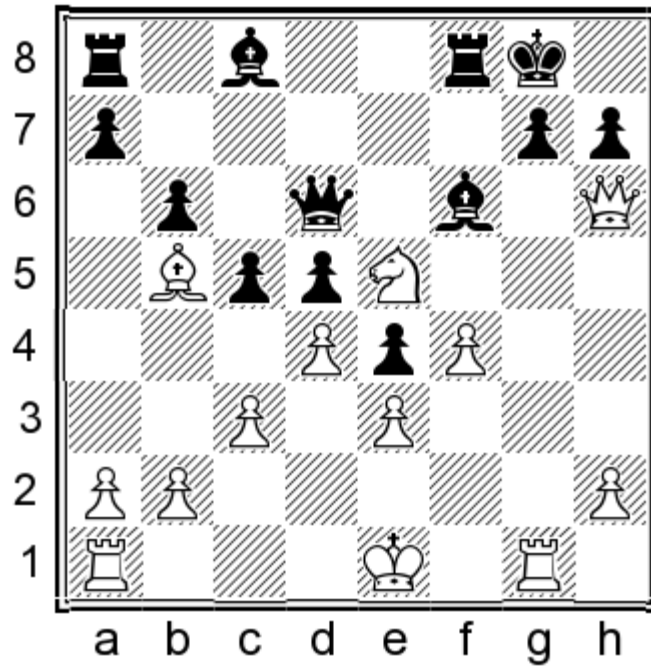
### 18.♖g1 ♕f6

Also in this position 18...♕e6 doesn't work because of 19.♘xe4 fxe4 (19...dxe4 20.♖h6 ♕f6 21.♙d7!+-) 20.♖h6 ♕f6 21.♙d7!



with the idea ...♕e6-♖g7 21...♙xd7 22.♖xg7+-

### 19.♘xe4 fxe4 20.♖h6!



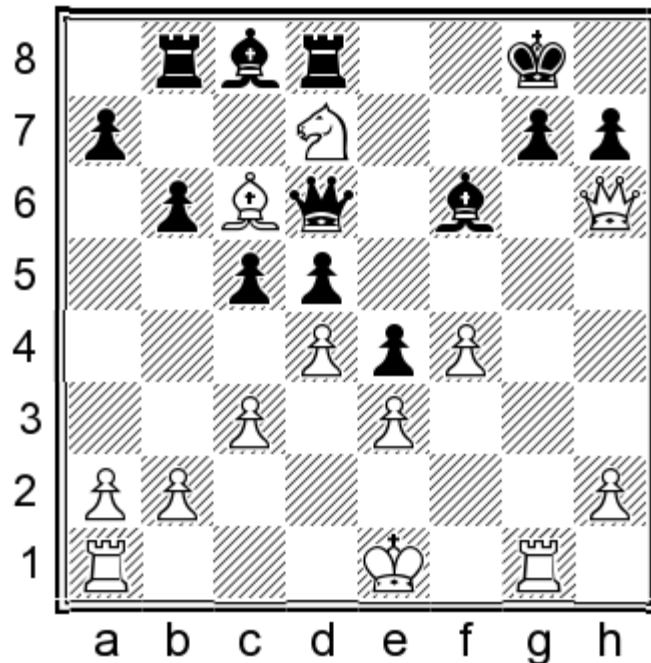
20...Rd8?

Losing by force. The rook leaves the f6 point and now the bishop on f6 will hang. The only move was 20...Qc7  
 21. Qc6 Qb7 22. Qxb7 Qxb7 23. 0-0-0 cxd4 24. cxd4 Rac8+ 25. Qb1±

21. Qc6!+- Qxe5

Now Black is forced to give up some material!

21...Rb8 22. Qd7!



This is the point! A lot of tactical possibilities are hidden in this position. (22. Qxd5+ is not clear after 22...Qf8!  
 23. Qxh7 Qxd5 24. Qh8+ Qg8 25. Qxg8+ Qxg8 26. Qc6 Qe6±) 22...Qh4+ (22... Rxd7 23. Qxd7 Qxd7 24. Rg7+-;

22... ♖xd7 23. ♜xg7++-) 23. ♜xh4 ♖xd7 24. ♜g5 ♜f8 25. ♖xd5++-

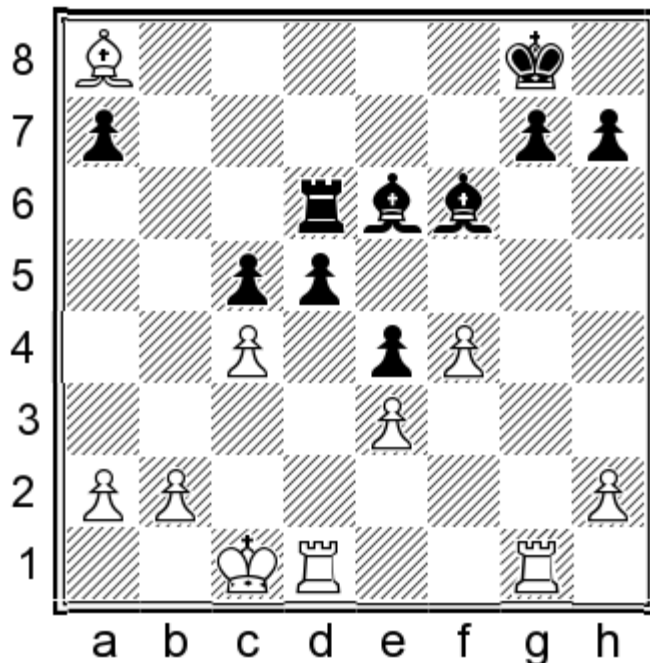
22. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 23. ♖xa8

White is the exchange up but the position must be played carefully.

23... ♖f6 24. dxc5!

White needs to get to the d5 pawn.

24... bxc5 25. 0-0-0 ♖e6 26. c4!



In this way the problem of the misplaced bishop is solved.

26...d4 27. ♖xe4 ♖xc4 28. b3 ♖a6

In case 28... ♖e2 white has the strong answer 29. ♜d2 d3 30. ♖xd3! ♖xd3 31. ♜gd1+-

29. ♖d3

The only move, otherwise ...e4 comes!

29... ♖xd3 30. ♜xd3 ♜e6 31. ♜e1 ♜e4

Preventing e4!

32. ♔d2 dxe3+ 33. ♜exe3

Black took one pawn but the rook is entering on the 7th rank!

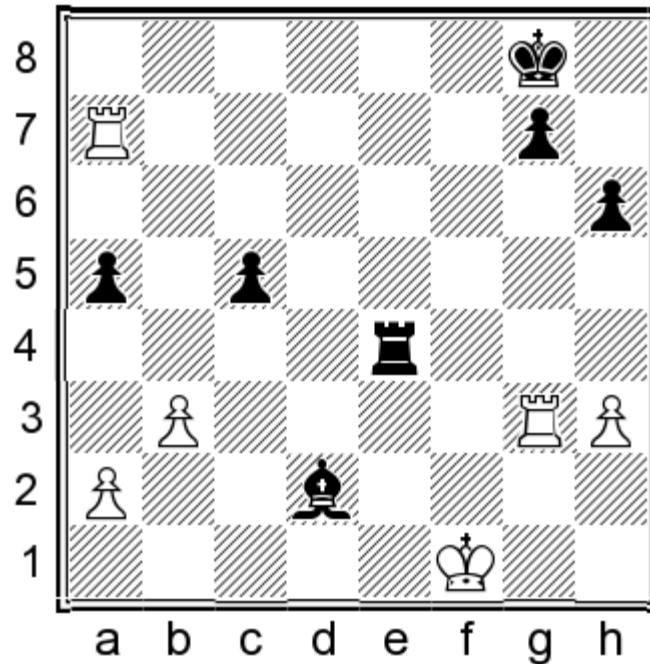
33... ♜xf4 34. ♜d7 ♖g5 35. ♔e2

Against top players you always need to be careful. 35. ♜e8+?? ♜f8+-+

35...h6 36.♖f3 ♜h4 37.h3

The safest way of avoiding the tricks is to keep the pieces on the white squares!

37...a5 38.♞a7 ♞e4+ 39.♔f1 ♚d2 40.♞g3!



White wins a pawn or exchanges rooks.

40...♚g5

40...g5 41.♞d3 ♞d4 42.♞xd4 cxd4 43.♔e2 ♚b4 44.♞d7 ♚c3 45.♔d3+-

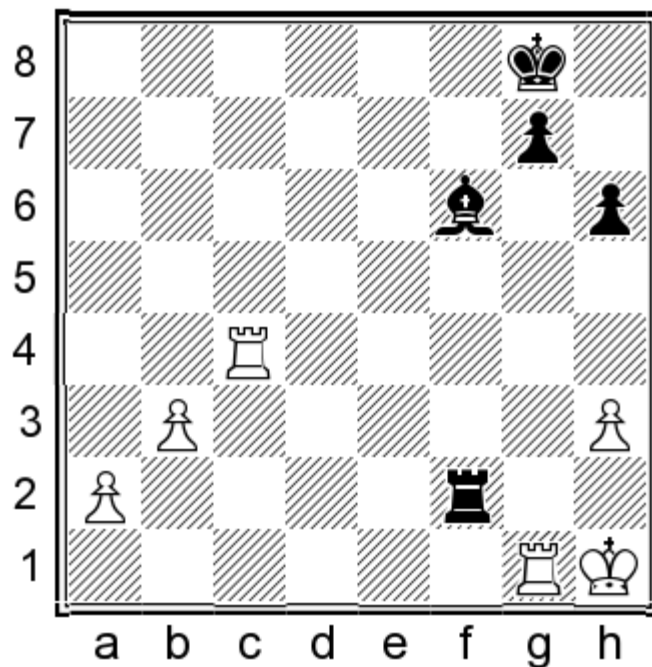
41.♞xa5 c4 42.♞a4!

The quickest way. Black is pinned on the 4th rank. 42.bxc4 ♞xc4 43.♞a8+ ♔h7 44.a4 ♞c1+ 45.♔e2+- and White is winning but it can take a lot of time.

42...♚h4 43.♞g1!

This looks passive, but the idea is to support pushing the pawns on the queenside in the future! 43.♞g4 ♞e1+ 44.♔g2 cxb3 45.axb3 ♚f6 and Black has gained some minor chances in the endgame! He will control the b-pawn from behind.

43...♞f4+ 44.♔g2 ♞f2+ 45.♔h1 ♚f6 46.♞xc4!



I didn't want to have a passive rook after 46.bxc4 ♖c2

46...♞xa2 47.♞b1!

Like in all rook endgames, the rook should support the pawn from behind. Finally Black's counterplay is killed off!

47...♙f7 48.b4 ♙e6 49.b5 ♞a7 50.♞c6+ ♙d5 51.b6 ♞a1 52.♞cc1

I must admit that this is one of my favorite victories. Conclusion: When White makes a Stonewall set-up, with pawns c3-d4-e3-f4, the most important thing is to control the e4 square and to keep the knight on e5. To achieve that, you have to know two things: the first is to exchange your dark-squared bishop for the knight to prevent ...♘e4 sometimes, and the second is to provoke weaknesses on the kingside with the move ♞h5, after which the move ...f6 for Black usually doesn't work!

1-0

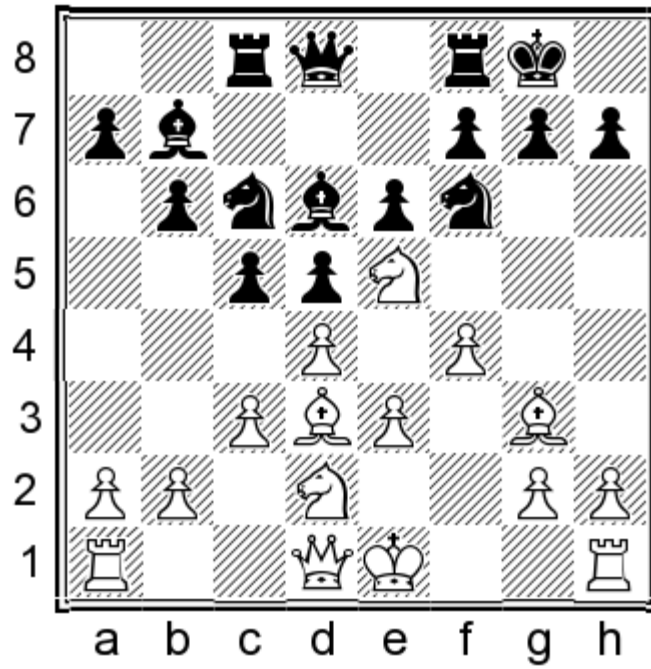
**N. Sedlak (2557) — A. Brkic (2599)**  
EU-chT 20th Reykjavik (7.4), 20.11.2015

This game is reminiscent a lot of the previous! In the classical set-up with ...e6 and a further ...0-0, ...b6, my opponent — this time Croatian GM Ante Brkic — made a similar inaccuracy. Compared with previous game he continued 9...♙b7 and after 10.f4 then ...♞c8?! This limp move allowed me to advance the identical plan to the previous game! Somehow in my "London" experience it happened very often that I won games in the same way. I can only explain this by the fact that many players underestimate this opening and don't take it seriously enough in their preparations.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♙f4 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 e6 6.c3 ♙d6 7.♙g3 0-0 8.♙d3 b6 9.♘e5 ♙b7

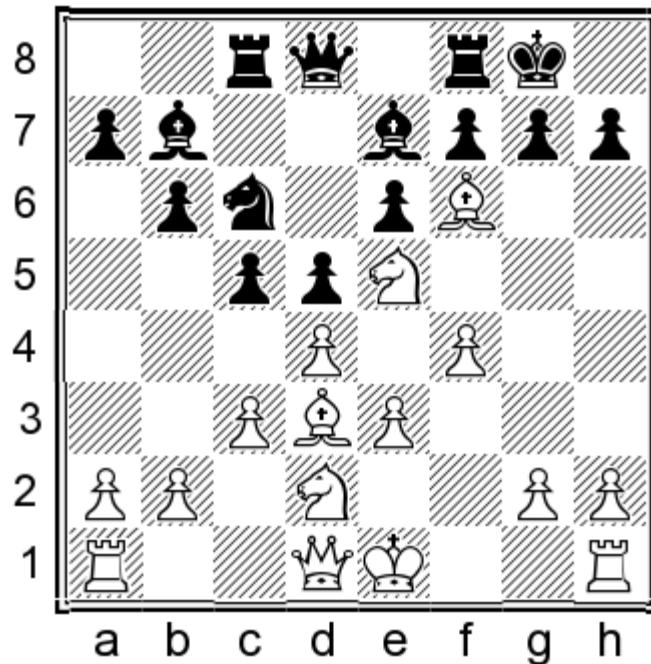
In the previous game we saw 9...♞c7?!

10.f4 ♞c8?!



This developing move looks very strange to me. After this limp move, the typical plan for white works easily. The right move is 10...♘e7 as in the next game.

11. ♕h4 ♖e7 12. ♕xf6!±



A similar plan to the previous game. It is almost always good to exchange the bishop for a knight in these types of positions.

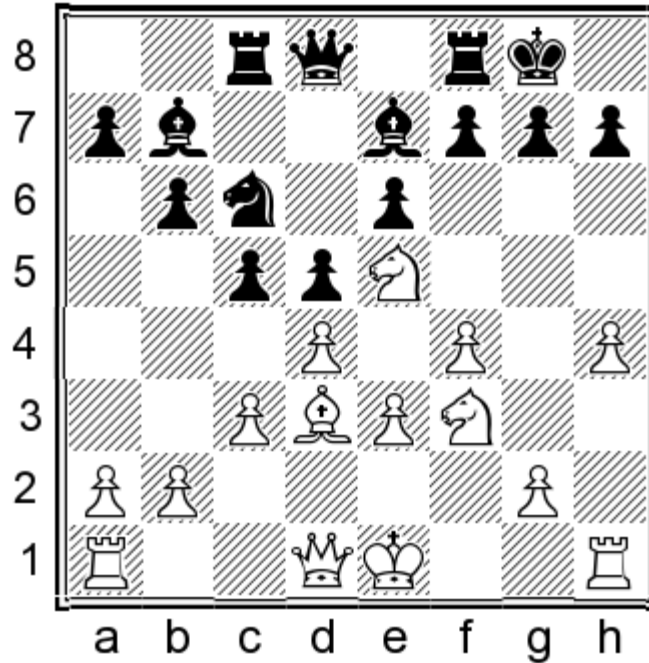
12... ♕xf6 13. ♘df3

The standard idea 13. ♖h5 provoking weaknesses is not so strong here because Black has 13...g6 14. ♗e2 ♕xe5! 15. fxe5 f6 16. exf6 ♗xf6⇌

### 13...♙e7

After another slow move the position starts to become a nightmare for Black! The only move to stay in the game was 13...♙xe5! 14.fxe5 f6 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16.0-0! ♜h6 (16...♙e7 17.♙b5± and the e5 square is in White's hands.) 17.♜d2 The queen is more useful on d2 than on e2, because of the idea b4. 17...♞f6 18.♞f2 ♜cf8 19.♞af1± with a small advantage due to the slightly better bishop and control of the e5 square. Plans for White could be ♙b5 or b4!

### 14.h4!



The key move! It not only starts an attack, but the main idea is to prevent f6!

### 14...♘xe5

14...f6? is losing after 15.♘g5! fxg5 16.hxg5 (also wins 16.♜h5 h6 17.♜g6 ♘xe5 18.fxe5 ♞f5 19.♜xe6+ ♞f7 20.♜g6 ♔f8 21.♜h7+-) 16...♘xe5 17.dxe5 g6 18.♞xh7! ♔xh7 19.♜h5+- with mate in two!

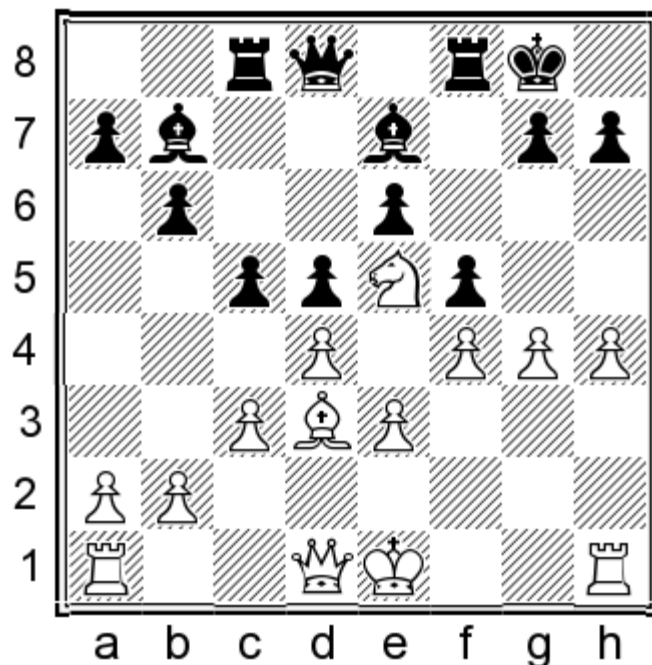
### 15.♘xe5

Again an important move after which ...f6 doesn't work! 15.fxe5 achieves nothing for White after 15...f5! 16.exf6 ♙xf6±

### 15...f5

Black is more-or-less forced to play this move. 15...f6 16.♜h5 f5 17.g4 ♜e8 18.♜xe8 ♞cxe8 19.gxf5 exf5 20.h5± or 15...♙d6 and now comes our favourite 16.♜h5! f5 (16...g6?! 17.♜h6 ♞c7 18.h5 ♜f6 19.hxg6 fxg6 20.♘f3±; 16...h6 17.g4 ♙xe5 18.fxe5 ♜e8 19.0-0-0±) 17.g4 ♜e8 18.♜xe8 ♞cxe8 19.gxf5 exf5 20.h5± with a clear advantage in the endgame! The pawns f5 and d5 are potentially weak while White has a free hand to combine play on both flanks!

### 16.g4!±



Almost everything happens the same compared with the previous game!

**16...cxd4 17.exd4 ♔xh4+**

Black risks taking the pawn on h4 and opens the h-file to his king. Other moves do not promise a good position for him either. 17...♔d6 18.gxf5 exf5 19.♚f3 ♖c7 20.0-0-0± black is powerless against plan ♖dg1-♖g5-♖hg1-h5.

**18.♔d2 ♕f6**

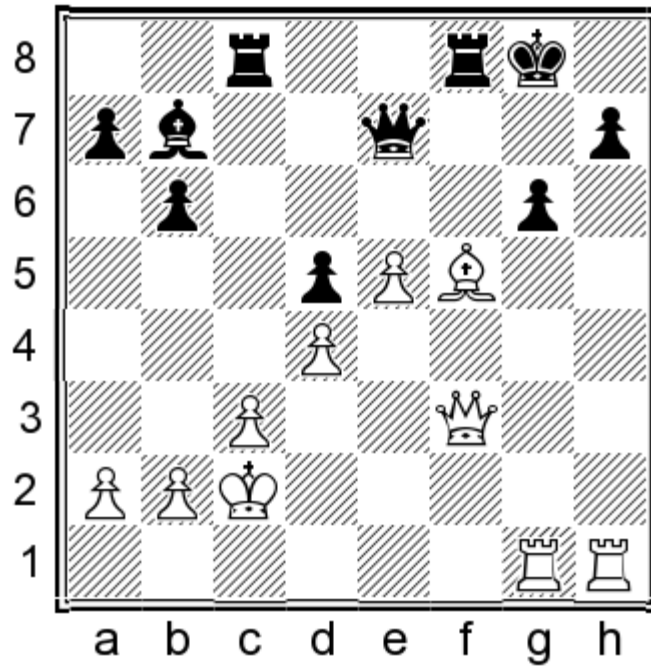
Forced! The threat was g5!

**19.gxf5 ♕xe5 20.fxe5 ♚g5+ 21.♔c2 exf5**

During the game I was waiting for 21...♖xf5 after which comes the sophisticated move 22.♚e2! White has no reason to hurry (22.♕xf5?! gives some small chances for Black to survive. 22...♚xf5+ 23.♚d3 ♚xd3+ 24.♔xd3 ♖f8 25.♔e3 ♕a6 26.♖ag1±) 22...♖cf8 23.♕xf5 ♚xf5+ 24.♔b3+- The fastest way to win is to keep queens on the board and to play against the black king.

After 21...♚g2+ 22.♔b3 the king is very safe here. 22...exf5 23.♚h5 ♚g6 24.♚h4+- with ♖ag1 next.

**22.♚f3 g6 23.♖ag1 ♚e7 24.♕xf5!+-**

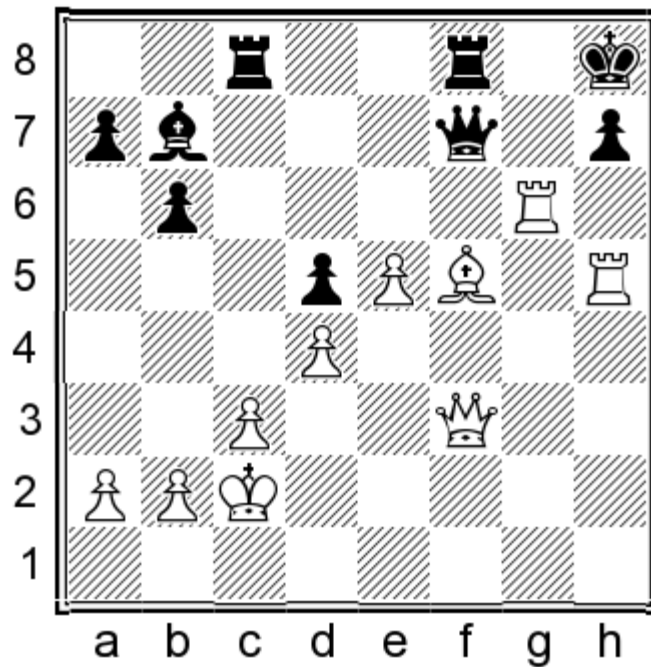


This looks a little bit risky because of the pin.

24...♙f7 25.♖h5

Almost all of white pieces are being targeted but Black can't use this! Also possible was 25.♖g5 and between these 2 moves there is not a big difference.

25...♔h8 26.♖xg6?!



When I saw this move, I stopped searching for something more. Stronger and faster was 26.e6! ♖g7 (26... ♖xe6 27. ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 28. ♖h5++-) 27. ♖g3+-

26...♖xg6

Black didn't have a better solution than entering into this endgame!

27. ♖xg6 ♜xf3 28. ♜xh7+ ♔g8 29. ♜xb7

All the black pawns are hanging.

29... ♜c6 30. ♖e8 ♜f2+ 31. ♔b3 ♜h6 32. ♔a3! ♜hh2 33. ♖c6

Conclusion: For this game, the conclusion is exactly the same as for the previous game. White won both games in the same way: by implementing the same plan after Black's inaccuracies in the opening.

1-0

**Z. Izoria (2573) — M. A. Brattain (2336)**

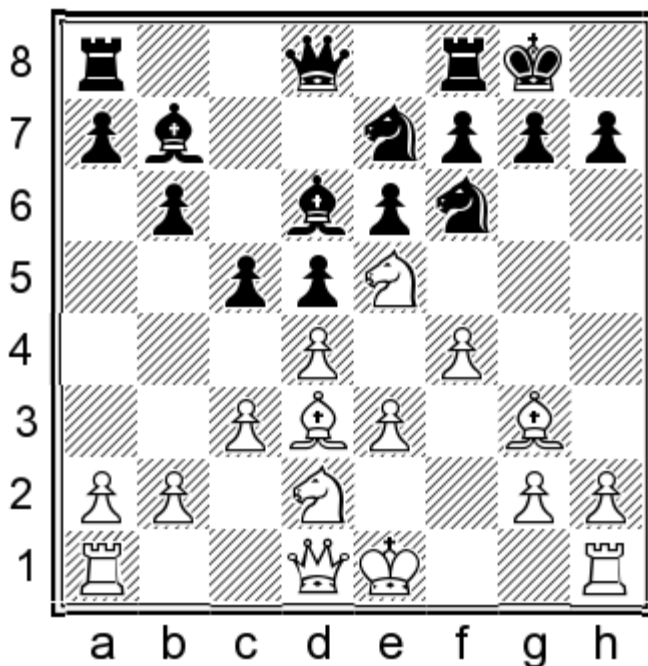
ICC INT ICC INT (9), 20.10.2015

Finally in this game Black reacts the best way in the opening! Compared with the previous game, here he played 10... ♖e7! — the right plan. The idea is to play ... ♖f5-♖e7-♖d6-♖fe4! This maneuver is characteristic in the Stonewall. The “Georgian beast”, a forgotten big chess talent, reacted the best way also with 11. ♜b1! opposing the Black plan. However the huge difference between the two players is obvious and at the critical moment, in an unclear position, Black chose the wrong plan which was roughly punished by Izoria Zviad.

1.d4 d5 2. ♖f4 ♖f6 3.e3 e6 4. ♖d2 c5 5.c3 ♖c6 6. ♖gf3 ♖d6 7. ♖g3 0-0 8. ♖d3 b6

This is clearly the best set-up for Black!

9. ♖e5 ♖b7 10.f4 ♖e7!



11. ♜b1!

The only move which gives chances to fight for an advantage. This is a typical move in the Slav Defense, with the idea of controlling the e4 square. In this position the f5 square is also important. Black's main idea is to play ...♖f5 with next ...♗e7, ...♘d6. Other moves don't cause any problems for Black. On the highest level White had no reason to be happy after 11.♙f3 ♘f5 12.♗f2 ♗e7! 13.g4 ♘d6 14.g5 ♖fe4 15.0-0 c4 16.♗c2 b5→, and Black was much faster on the queenside. Karjakin,S (2769)-Adams,M (2744) Wijk aan Zee 2016;

11.♙c2 c4 12.♗e2 ♘f5 13.♗f2 ♗e7!∞ with ♘d6 next Andreikin D.-Karjakin S. FIDE World cup 2015.

### 11...g6

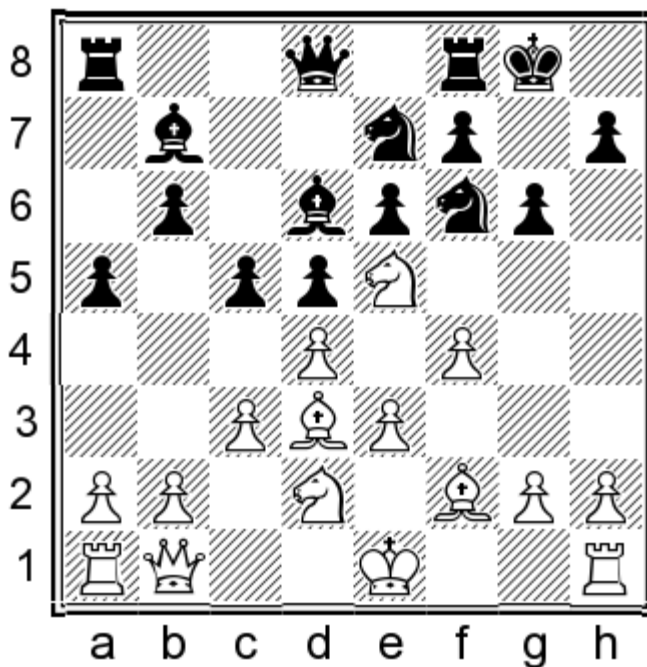
11...♘g6 also make sense 12.0-0 ♘h5 13.♗e1! (13.♗f2 is not so good because White doesn't have the ♗f3 plan.) 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♘f6 15.♗f3! is a little improvement bringing the rook into the attack (15.a3 ♗c8 16.h3 ♙c7 17.♗g3 ♙b8∞ Kamsky G.-Dreev A. FIDE World blitz 2013.) 15...♗c8 16.♗h3 and White has good attacking chances. The idea might be ♘df3-♘g5 or ♘g6-♗h4! for example.

### 12.♗f2

The idea is to prevent ...♘f5 with tempo. 12.♗h4 doesn't prevent 12...♘f5 as 13.♗xf5 (13.♗xf6 ♙xf6 14.♘d7 ♙h4+∞) 13...exf5 14.♘df3 (14.♗xf6 ♙xf6 15.♘d7? ♙e7 16.♘xf8 ♙xe3+→; 14.g4 fxg4 15.♘g4 ♗e7 16.♘e5 ♘h5∞) 14...♗e7 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.h4 h5 (16...♗g7? 17.h5 f6 18.hxg6 fxe5 19.gxh7+ ♘h8 20.fxe5 and White has more than enough compensation. Black's king could be weak and his bishops are unusable.) 17.♙c2 ♗g7 18.♘f2 ♙e8∞ with ...f6 next and Black has a clear plan of pushing his pawns on the queenside! White lacks space and strongholds for his knights!

### 12...a5?!

It is a positionally good idea to exchange white-squared bishops, but it takes time.

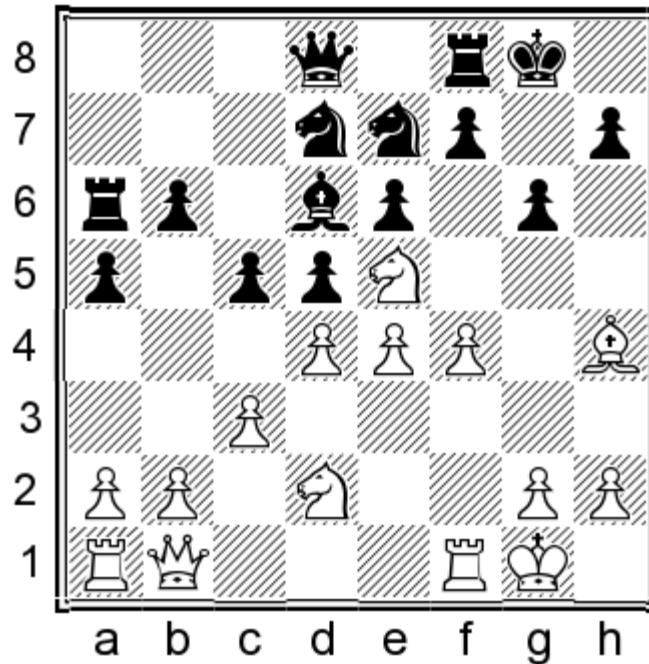


Black had a much better possibility in 12...cxd4 13.exd4 (Unfortunately 13.cxd4 Allows 13...♗b4!∞) 13...♘h5! 14.g3 f6 15.♘ef3 ♙c8 16.0-0 ♗a6 17.♗e1 ♘g7 Grischuk,A (2810)-Wang, H (2710) Beijing 2014

### 13.0-0 ♗a6 14.♗h4 ♘d7?

An awkward place for the knight in this position, which gives new possibilities to white. The correct move was 14...♙xd3 15.♚xd3 ♖e8±

15.♙xa6 ♖xa6 16.e4!



16...f5?

A panicky move which loses material. Black want to definite the position in the center but unfortunately for him it doesn't work. Other moves also do not promise a great position. 16...dxe4 17.♖xe4+- in this line is clear why 14...♖d7 was mistake.

16...♚c7 17.♚d3 ♖aa8 18.♖xd7 ♚xd7 19.e5 ♖f5□ (19...♙c7 20.dxc5! bxc5 21.♖e4+-) 20.♙f6 ♙e7 21.g4 ♖g7 (21...♙xf6 22.gxf5 ♙d8 23.f6±) 22.♙xg7 ♖xg7 23.f5 gxf5 24.gxf5 ♖h8 25.f6 ♖g8+ 26.♖h1 ♙f8 27.♖f4 ♖g6 28.♖h4→.

17.exd5 exd5 18.♚d3

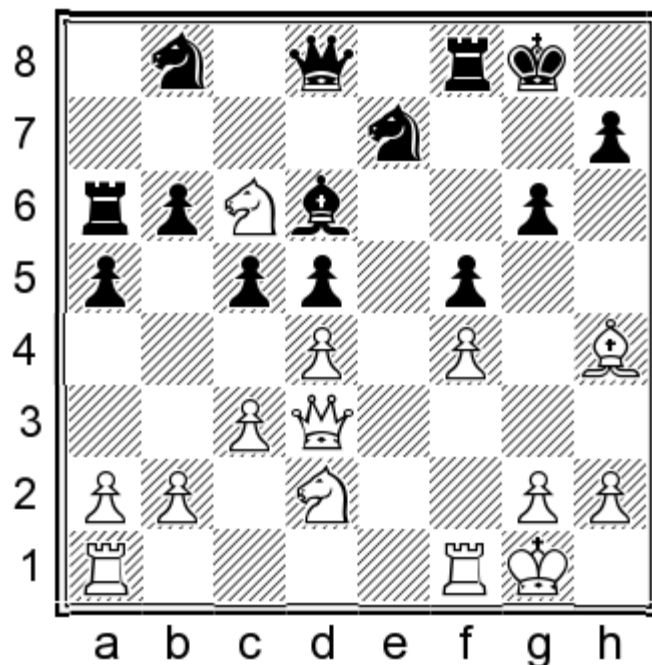
The simple 18.♖c6 also guaranteed a huge advantage 18...♚e8 19.♙xe7 ♙xe7 20.♖e1 ♖f7 21.♚d3 b5 the only move! (Too slow is 21...♖a8 22.♚e2 ♖f8 23.♚e6 ♖f6 24.♖f3 ♖e4 25.♖fe5+-) 22.♚xb5 ♖b6 23.♚a4 cxd4 24.cxd4 ♖f6 (24...♖xb2 25.♖f3 ♖f6 26.♖g5 ♖g7 27.♖e6+-) 25.♖e6 ♖g7 26.♖ae1 ♚d7 27.♖xe7 ♚xc6 28.♚xa5 ♖xb2 29.♚a7 ♖b7 30.♚xb7 ♚xb7 31.♖xb7 ♖xb7 32.♖a1±

18...♖b8

Black tries to defend the rook and c6 square at the same time. 18...♖a8 19.♖c6 ♚e8 20.♙xe7 ♙xe7 21.♖ae1 ♖f7 22.♚e2 ♖f8 23.♚e6 ♖f6 24.♖f3+-;

18...c4 19.♖dxc4 dxc4 20.♚xc4+-

19.♖c6!+-



but here is the surprise. The rest of the game was not so interesting: White's technique was without any mistakes.

19...♖bxc6 20.♗xa6 cxd4 21.♘b3 dxc3 22.bxc3 ♖c7 23.g3 ♕a3 24.♞ad1 ♜f7 25.♞fe1 ♞d8 26.♗b5 ♞d7 27.♜g2 ♘a7 28.♗e2 ♘ac6 29.♗e6+ ♜f8 30.♗f6+ ♜g8 31.♗e6+ ♜f8 32.♞g5 ♞d6 33.♞h6+ ♜e8 34.♗g8+ ♜d7 35.♗xh7

Conclusion: The critical moment in the opening was 11.♗b1! which is important to remember, preventing ...♘e4 and the plan ...♘f5-♞e7-♘d6! The position will be unclear after 12...cxd4! , but it is far from being a position where White cannot continue playing for a win — it is still very rich in strategic possibilities!

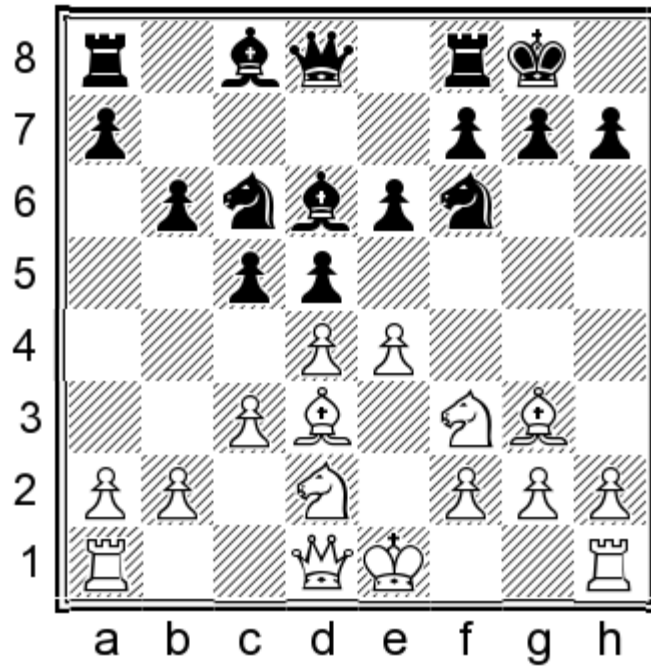
1-0

**N. Sedlak (2565) — M. Prusikin (2493)**

Regionalliga SO 1314 Bayern (6.1), 09.02.2014

In this game, again in the classical set-up with ...0-0, ...b6, I chose another — at that time very rare — plan 9.e4!? after which there arises a completely new type of position! Immediately on the next move, probably surprised by my new idea, my opponent didn't react well with 9...dxe4?! and I grabbed the initiative, resulting in the end in a convincing victory.

1.d4 d5 2.♞f4 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘d2 e6 6.♘gf3 ♞d6 7.♞g3 0-0 8.♞d3 b6 9.e4!?



A relatively new approach and treatment of this position. The main idea is to take space with e5, introducing an attacking position!

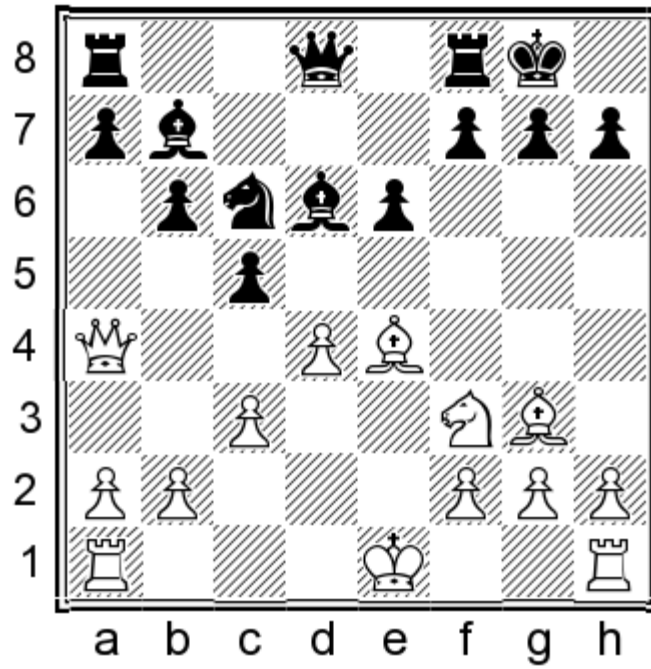
**9...dxe4?!**

After this move White develops an initiative. The best move is 9...♙e7! — and this was played in the next game.

**10.♘xe4 ♘xe4**

Black didn't have a better option here. On 10...♙e7 White dominates after 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 13.♚c2 h6 (13...g6 14.h4!→) 14.0-0-0 ♚b6 15.♙h7+! a typical check which forces Black's king to a worse place; 15...♖h8 16.♙e4 ♙b7 17.♞d7 ♞ac8 18.♞hd1 ♙a8 19.♚e2± and all White's pieces are well-positioned. One idea could be ♙c2-♚d3 or ♙b1-♚d3

**11.♙e4 ♙b7 12.♚a4!**



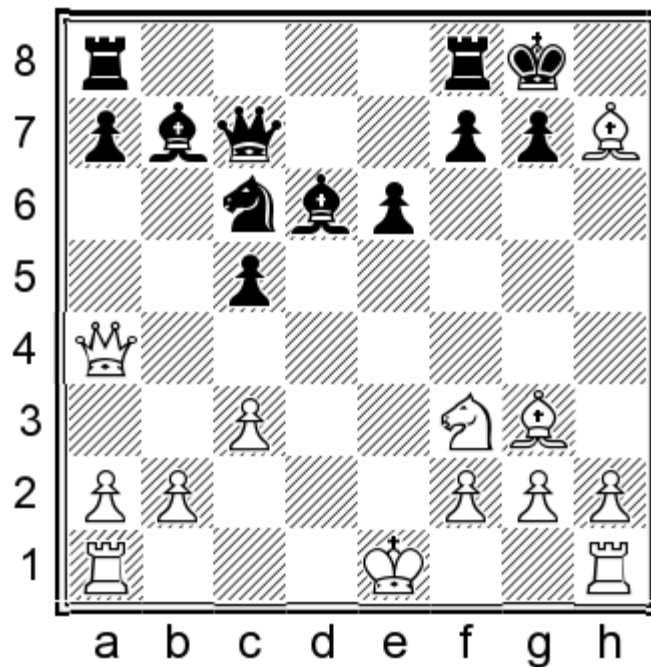
This is a key move! White's queen enters into play with tempo and frees the square d1 for the rook! There also appears motifs like dc with ♔h7 next, after which the queen joins the attack with ♕h4.

### 12...♖c8

The most logical move! 12...♗c7? loses because of 13.dxc5 bxc5

(13...♔xg3 14.hxg3 f5 15.♔xc6 ♔xc6 16.cxb6 axb6 17.♗c4 ♖fe8 18.0-0 ♗b7 19.♖fe1 ♔d5 20.♗e2±)

14.♔xh7+!



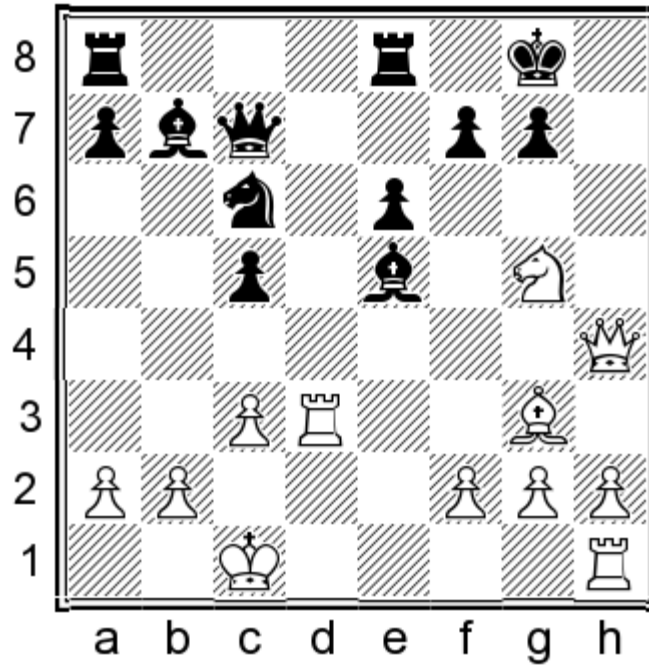
This typical sacrifice works but not with 'human' moves and I will show just one of the many wins according to the computer.

(Also possible is to play safer 14.0-0-0 ♔xg3 15.hxg3 h6 16.♗b5!±)

14...♙xh7 15.♚h4+ ♘g8 16.♗g5 ♜fe8 17.0-0-0 ♕e5□

(17...♕xg3 18.hxg3 ♙f8 19.♖h7+ ♘g8 20.♗f6+ ♙f8 21.♗d7+ with fast mating)

18.♞d3!



The rook joins the attack via f3 18...♞ad8 19.♚h7+ ♙f8 20.♞f3 f5 21.♚h5! a silent move with the idea ♞e1-♞e5 21...♙g8 22.♞d3!! Another great move with the simple idea of ♞d8! 22...f4

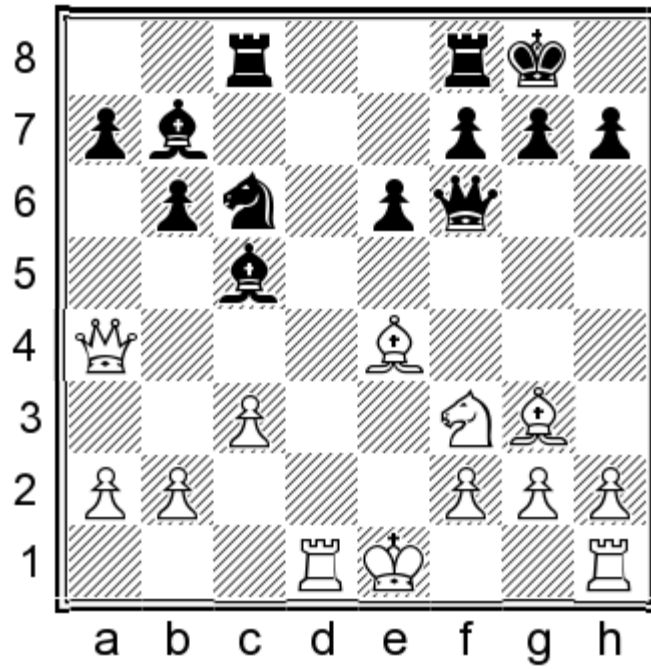
(22...♞xd3?? 23.♚xe8#; 22...♕f4+ 23.♙b1+-)

23.♞xd8 ♚xd8 24.♚f7+ ♙h8 25.♚g6 ♙g8 26.♞d1 ♗d4□ 27.cxd4 cxd4 28.♚h7+ ♙f8 29.♗xe6+! ♞xe6 30.♚h8+ ♙e7 31.♕h4+ ♕f6 32.♚xg7+ ♙d6 33.♚xb7+-

**13.dxc5 ♕xc5**

13...♕xg3 looks active but in the end Black's weaknesses remain, e.g. 14.hxg3 (Here not so good is 14.♕xh7+? ♙xh7 15.hxg3+ ♙g8 16.♚e4 f5 17.♚xe6+ ♞f7) 14...f5 15.♕c2 ♗a5 (15...bxc5 16.♕b3±) 16.♚h4! ♚xh4 17.♞xh4 ♞xc5 18.0-0-0±

**14.♞d1 ♚f6?**



The biggest problem with this move is the inability to play ...♖fd8 because of ♕h4. Better chances were given by 14...♚e7 15.0-0 (15.b4 f5! 16.♕d3 ♜xb4 17.cxb4 ♕xb4+ 18.♔f1 ♜c3↔) 15...♜fd8 (15...f5 16.♕d3 the pawn e6 is very weak. 16...♜cd8) 16.b4 ♕d6 17.b5 ♜a5 18.♕xb7 ♜c4 19.♕xd6 ♜xd6 20.♚a3 ♜xb7 21.♚xa7 ♚c7 22.♜xd6 (22. ♜e5 ♜xc3 23. ♜c6 ♜xd1 24. ♜xd1 g6=) 22...♜xd6 23.♚xc7 ♜xc7 24.♜d1 ♜xc3 25.h3 ♜e8 26.♜d8 ♔f8 27.♜b8 and Black will suffer for a draw!

After 14...♚e8?? 15.♕xh7+! works again 15...♔xh7 16.♚h4+ ♔g8 17.♜g5+–

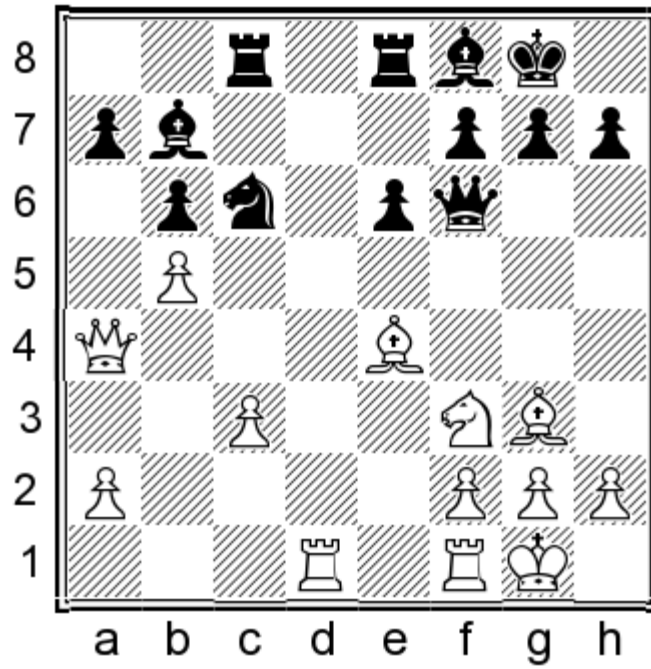
### 15.0-0± ♜fe8

15...a5 does not prevent 16.b4! axb4 17.cxb4 ♕e7 (17... ♕xb4 18.♕xc6+–) 18.♕h4+–

### 16.b4

I missed taking the pawn after 16.♜d7 ♕a8 17.♜c7! ♜xc7 18.♕xc7 e5 19.♕xe5 ♚h6 20.♜e1+–

### 16...♕f8 17.b5?!



With this move I lost a big part of my advantage. Much better was 17.♖e5! ♗xe5 18.♙xb7 ♜cd8 19.♚xa7± ♗c4 but for some reason I didn't like my queen on a7.

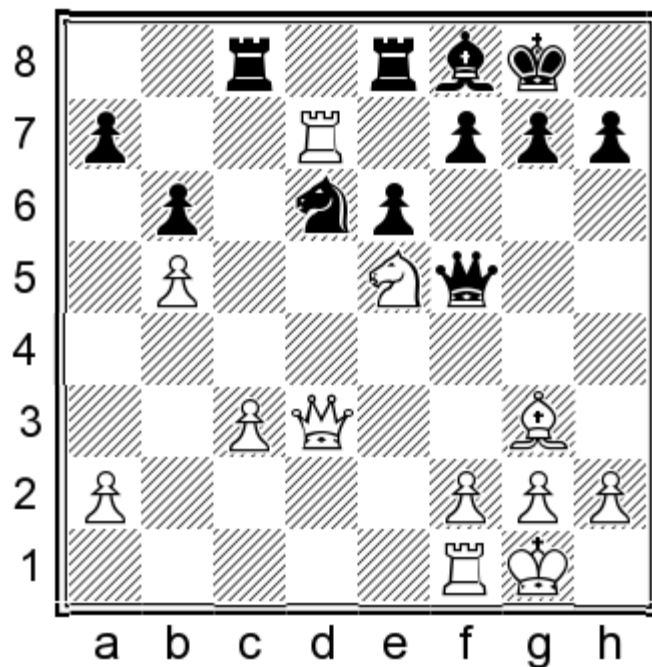
**17...♗a5 18.♙xb7 ♜c4!**

An intermediate move which I saw, but I thought after the further ♗e5-♞d7 that I would have a big advantage.

**19.♚c2 ♗xb7 20.♗e5 ♞cc8 21.♞d7 ♗d6**

Black could also play 21...♞e7!? 22.♞fd1 (22. ♞xe7 ♚xe7 23. ♗c6 ♚a3±) 22...♗c5 23.♞xe7 ♚xe7 24.♗c6 ♚b7 25.c4 a6 26.a4 axb5 27.axb5 ♚a8±

**22.♚d3 ♚f5?**



A blunder which leads to a loss! Black could escape with very precise moves 22...♖c5! 23.♖xd6 ♘xd6 24.♗xd6 ♜d8 25.♞d7 ♗g5 26.h4 ♗d5 27.♞d1 ♗xd6 28.♖xd6 ♞d5 29.♖xd5 exd5 30.♞e5 d4 31.cxd4 ♖xd4 32.♞c6 ♖a4 33.♙b8 a6 (33...♖xa2 34.♙xa7 ♖b2 35.♞d4+-) 34.bxa6 ♖xa6 with very good chances for the draw.

**23.♖xd6+- ♘xd6 24.♗xd6**

Two pieces are much stronger than a rook thanks to their strong coordination!

**24...♖xc3 25.♗d7 ♖f8 26.♞c6 ♗d3**

26...♞d3 27.♗e7 ♗xb5 28.♙d6 ♖a8 29.♗b7 ♞e8 30.♗d7+- with ♞e7! Next.

**27.♙d6**

Conclusion: Against the aggressive approach with 9.e4!?, the answer 9...dxe4? is a mistake! It opens the center at a moment when White's pieces stand much better, but White can exploit that only with very precise moves! The critical point in Black's position is the bishop on d6, which is evident especially after the key move 12.♗a4!

**1-0**

**A. Grischuk (2774) — H. Nakamura (2816)**

EU-Cup 31st Skopje (7.3), 24.10.2015

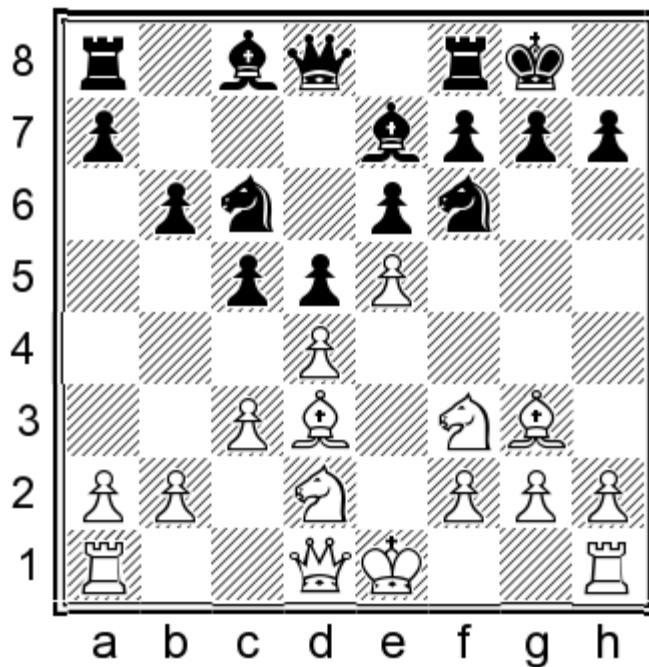
In comparing my previous game with this one at the top level, US star Nakamura was not surprised much by 9.e4!? He reacted in the best way with 9...♙e7! moving from the fork e5! In the game there appeared a structure typical of the French Defence, but with an unusually-placed bishop on g3! In this very exciting game full of fire, both players had their chances!

**1.d4 d5 2.♞f3**

Don't forget about our move order 2.♙f4!

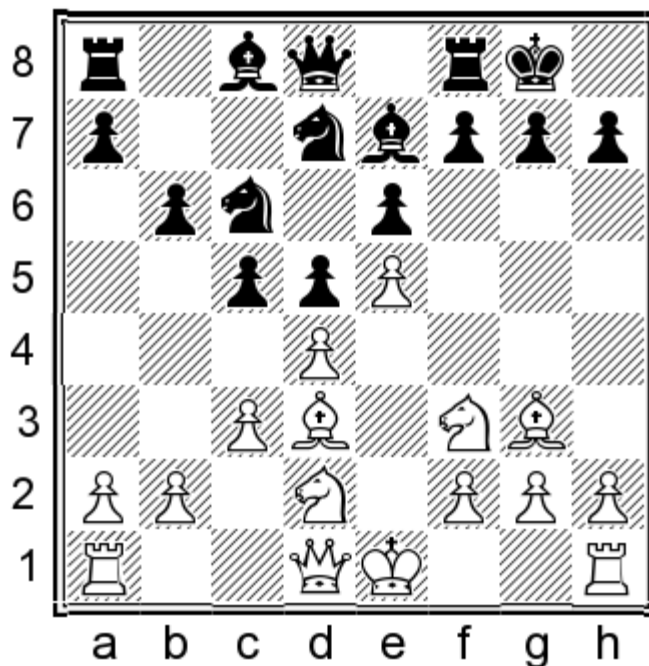
2...♖f6 3.♗f4 e6 4.e3 ♗d6 5.♗g3 c5 6.♘bd2 ♘c6 7.c3 0-0 8.♗d3 b6 9.e4!? ♗e7! 10.e5

Here we have a typical structure in the French Defence with an 'unusual' bishop on g3.



10...♘h5

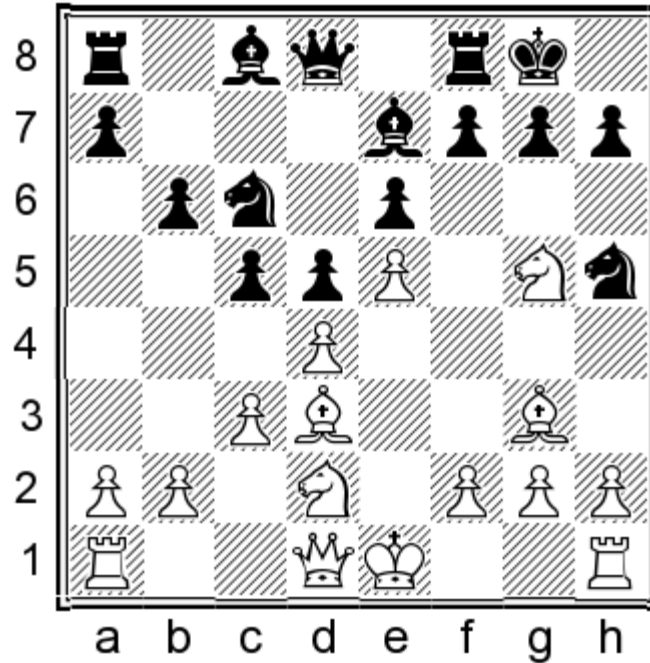
Almost the only move! The typical move 10...♘d7



leads Black into big problems after 11.h4! f6 12.♘g5! fxg5 13.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14.hxg5+ ♔g8 15.♖h8+! ♗xh8 16.♗h5+ ♗g8 17.g6+-

11.a3

A very interesting and aggressive alternative in this position is 11. ♖g5!?!N



11... ♖g5 (11... ♖xg3?? 12. ♕xh7+ ♔h8 13. ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 14. hxg3 ♕g5 15. ♕g6+ ♔g8 16. ♖h5 ♕xd2+ 17. ♔xd2 ♖xf2+ 18. ♔d1+-; 11...g6 12. ♖xh7! ♖e8 13. ♖g4 ♔g7 14. ♖f3 cxd4 15. ♖hg5±) 12. ♖xh5 g6 13. ♖e2 cxd4 14. h4! dxc3 15. bxc3 ♕xd2+ (15... ♕h6 16. h5 ♕g7 (16...g5 17. ♖f3 with the very unpleasant ♖h2-♖g4) 17. ♔f1! with the idea ♖e1-♖g4-♖h3) 16. ♖xd2 d4 17. ♕e4 ♕b7 18. cxd4 ♖d7 19. ♖d1 (19. h5? ♖xd4 20. ♕xb7 ♖ad8! ♖ defending the knight with the threat ♖f3) 19... ♖e7 20. f3 h5

After 11.0-0?! White doesn't have any attacking chances 11... ♕d7 12. ♖e1 ♖c8 13. a3 ♖xg3 14. hxg3 f5 ♖ Kamsky,G (2683)-Nakamura,H (2798) Saint Louis 2015.

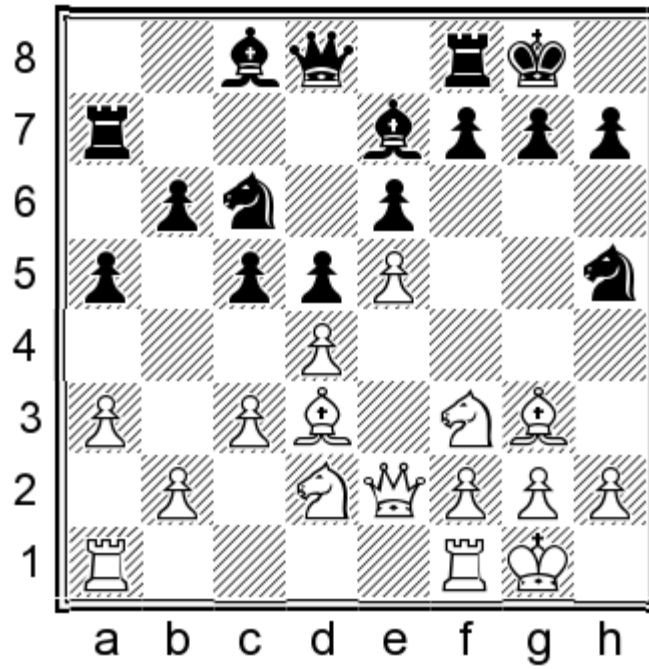
### 11...a5 12. ♖e2

Here the same idea with 12. ♖g5?! doesn't work after 12... ♕xg5 13. ♖xh5 g6 14. ♖e2 cxd4 15. h4 dxc3 16. bxc3 ♕xd2+ 17. ♖xd2 ♕a6! with a3-a5 the difference is big 18. ♕xa6 ♖xa6 19. h5 ♖a7 ♖ and Black's king is safe.

### 12... ♖a7!?

A clever move with several ideas. Defending the 7th rank after a further ...f6 or ...f5 and the idea is fast action on the queenside with ...c4-b5-b4 after which the rook is defended. In one rapid game on the highest level, Black reacted badly with 12...c4? 13. ♕c2 b5 14. ♖g5! ♕xg5 (14...g6 15. ♖xh7!+-) 15. ♖xh5 g6 16. ♖e2 f5 17. exf6 ♖xf6 18. h4 ♕f4 19. ♕xf4 ♖xf4 20. g3 ♖f6 21. f4 ♖a7 22. ♖f3 h6 23. ♖e5 ♖xe5 24. dxe5 ♖g7 25. ♖g4± Kramnik,V (2777)-Zhigalko,S (2656) Berlin 2015.

### 13.0-0?!



This looks slow and loses attacking chances. White had a chance to improve his “bad” knight with 13. ♖f1!? c4 (13...f5 14.exf6 ♙xf6 15. ♖d1! ♜af7 16. ♗e3 g6 17. ♙b5! a typical method of fighting for the e5 square 17... ♙d7 18. ♗g4 ♙g7 19. ♙xc6 ♙xc6 20. ♗ge5 ♜c7 21. ♗xc6 ♜xc6 22.0-0±) 14. ♙c2 b5 15. ♗g5 ♙xg5 16. ♜xh5 g6 17. ♜e2 f5! 18.exf6 ♙xf6 19. ♗e3 e5! Otherwise there comes ♗g4-♗e5 20.dxe5 ♗xe5 21. ♖d1 ♖d7 22.0-0 ♖e8±

### 13...c4!

Usually this reaction of closing the center is not good but now it's matter of concrete play!

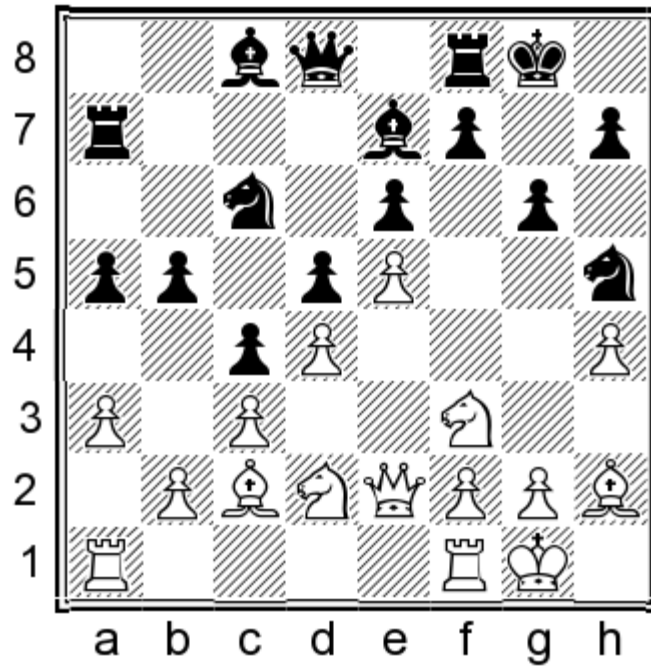
### 14. ♙c2 b5 15.h4

The idea is to save the bishop after which the knight on h5 can become problematic.

### 15...g6?

Black misses a chance for a big advantage. Very logical was 15... ♗xg3! 16.fxg3 b4 17.axb4 axb4 18. ♗xc4 and probably in his calculations Black missed 18...b3! (18...dxc4? 19. ♜e4±) 19. ♜xa7 ♗xa7 20. ♙xb3 dxc4 21. ♙xc4 ♙b7±

### 16. ♙h2!



Now the knight on h5 is in danger.

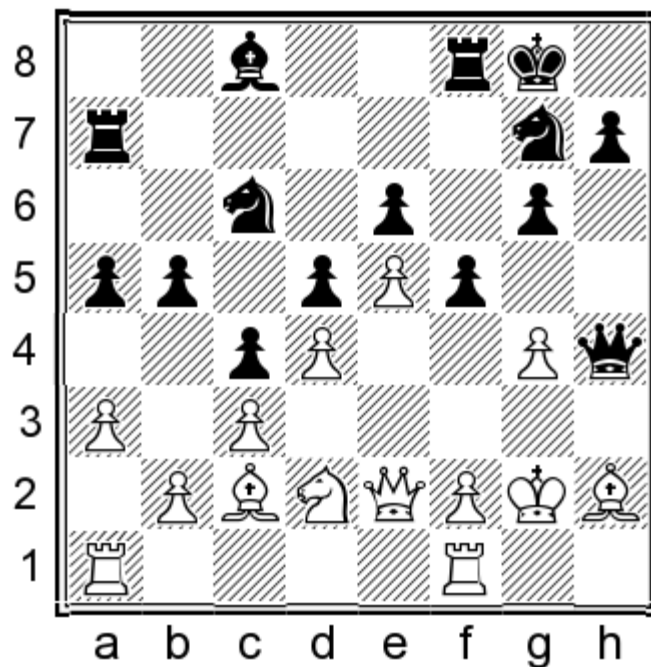
**16... ♖xh4**

Black must accept the challenge!

**17. g4 ♜g7 18. ♘xh4?!**

Unnecessary and again Black can breathe. The bishop on h4 is a bad piece. White could have continued the attack with 18. ♖e3 ♗e7 19. ♕g2 f5 20. exf6 ♗xf6 21. ♖h1 ♜e8 22. ♗g3 with an open h-file compensating for the pawn!

**18... ♖xh4 19. ♕g2 f5!**



Black must do something active, otherwise he will find himself with new problems.

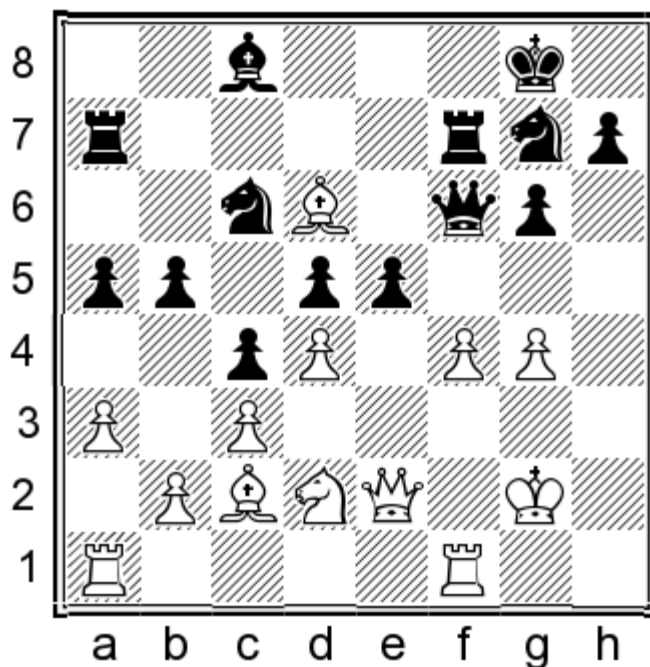
**20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.♙d6**

An attractive move. Also possible was 21.♘f3 e5! 22.♘xe5 ♘xe5 23.♙xe5 ♖g5 24.f3 ♖af7 25.♖ae1 ♘e6 26.♗e3 ♘f4+ 27.♙xf4 ♖xf4 28.♙d1=

**21...♖ff7 22.f4?**

Here White didn't feel the danger. Much safer was 22.f3 to protect the g4 pawn

**22...e5!**



A nice break in the center after which all Black's pieces become active and White's king weak. The pawn g4 is also a target.

**23.dxe5**

23.fxe5 ♖h4±;

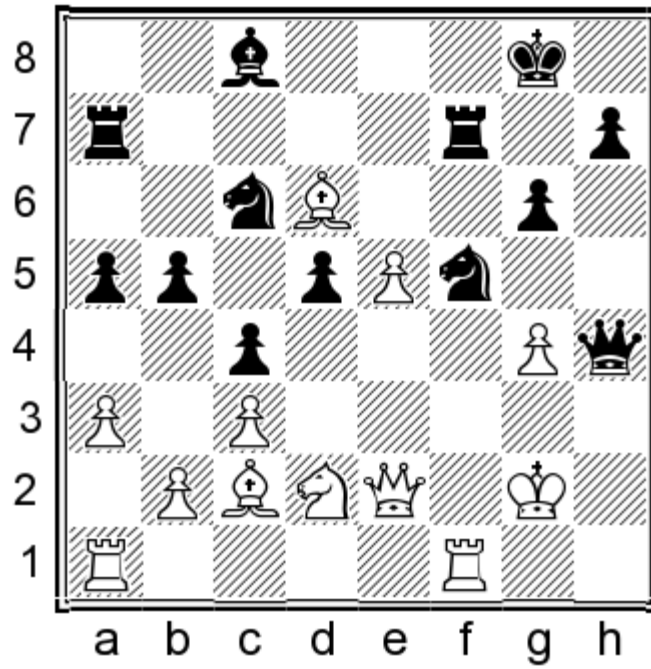
23.♙xe5 ♘xe5 24.dxe5 ♖h4±

**23...♖h4 24.f5!**

The only move!

**24...gxf5?**

In a very complicated position, and probably in time-trouble, mistakes are common even at the top level of chess. Black had very nice and strong move 24...♘xf5! after which White's position collapses.

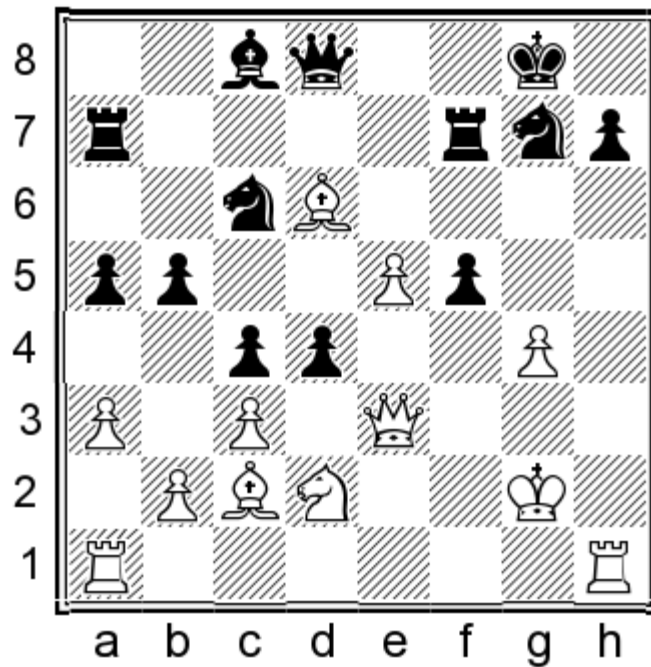


25.e6 (25. ♕xf5 gxf5 26. ♖f3 ♜xg4+ 27. ♔f2 ♖g7 28. ♖g1 ♜f4 29. ♜e3 ♜xe3+ 30. ♔xe3 ♖g4 31. ♖h2 ♖xg1 32. ♖xg1+ ♖g7 33. ♖xg7+ ♔xg7; 25.gxf5 gxf5--+ and Black's attack is unstoppable.) 25...♖g7! 26.♖xf5 26...gxf5 27.♕xf5 h5 28.♖f3 ♖xg4+ 29.♕xg4 ♜xg4+ 30.♔f2 ♖g7 31.♖g1 ♜xe6 32.♜xe6+ ♕xe6 33.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 34.♔e3

25.♖h1 ♜d8

25...♜g5 is too risky after 26.♖f3 ♜xg4+ 27.♔f2

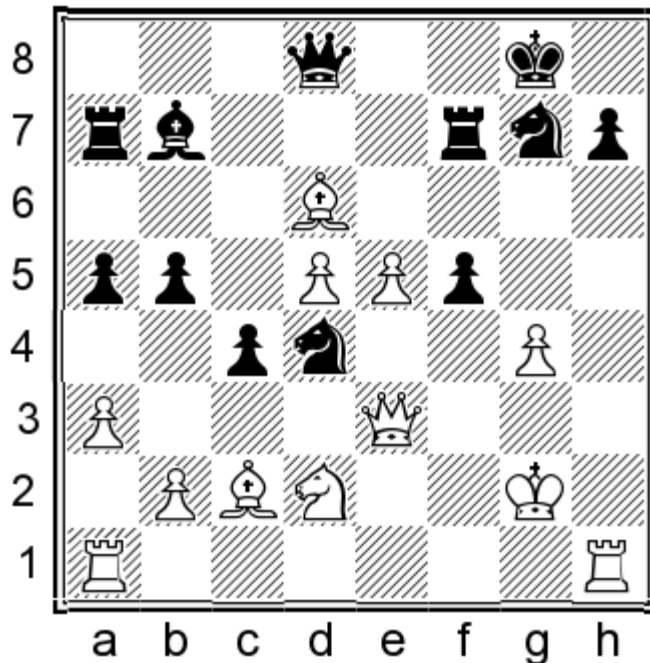
26.♜e3 d4!



In this position there is no time for slow moves. Black opens the diagonal and threatens the White king.

27.cxd4 ♖e8?

Black should play consistently: 27...♙b7! 28.d5 ♞d4!!



The only move to hold the position. 29.♙xd4 ♞e6 30.♙e3 (30.♙xa7? ♙xd5+--+) 30...♙xd5+↗

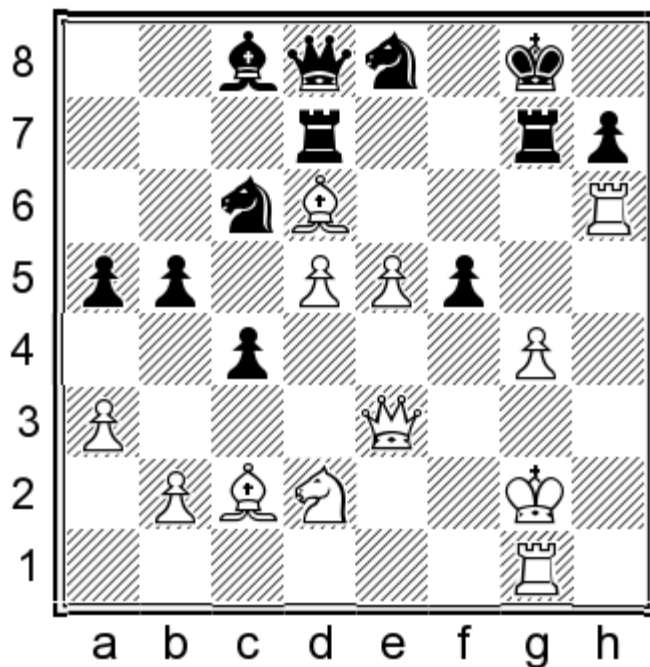
**28.♙h6?**

A very slow move which brings Black back to life. This move doesn't really have a big threat! 28.♙c5! ♞ac7 29.♞f3±

**28...♙g7 29.♙g1 ♞ad7?**

Both sides miss chances! Very logical was 29...♞xg4+ 30.♞f1 ♞xg1+ 31.♙xg1+ ♞g7 32.♙e3 ♞e7 33.♙xe7 ♙xe7 34.d5? f4! next is ♙g5! And the black king looks much safer now.

**30.d5?**



The engine is very cold-blooded in this position and finds 30.♔f1!± with a continuing attack, and now 30...♘xd6 doesn't work because of 31.exd6 ♖xd6 32.♞xd6 ♚xd6 when White has 33.♚e8+ ♜f8 34.♚xc6+—

**30...♘e7 31.♙xe7 ♞dx7 32.♚d4 ♘b7?**

This was the last of many mistakes in this game. Much better was 32...♞xg4+ 33.♔f1 ♞eg7 34.♞xg4 ♞xg4±

**33.♔f2 ♚xd5 34.♚xd5+ ♘xd5 35.♙xf5 ♞xe5**

Both players, tired of calculating, enter an about equal endgame. Black is a pawn up but the position has reduced and the white king is closer to the main events.

**36.♞e1 ♞xe1 37.♔xe1 b4 38.axb4 axb4 39.♙e6+ ♘xe6 40.♞xe6 ♘c7**

Conclusion: After the best reaction of Black with 9...♙e7 the position becomes very sharp which reminds us a lot of positions from the French Defence! White's biggest problems are the ♘d2 (which can remain fairly useless for a long time) and the ♙g3 which disturbs the white attack! For these reasons 11.♘g5!? deserves serious attention! Another way to solve the problems with the minor pieces is the plan ♘f1 before castling, followed by ♘e3 or, h4 with the idea ♙h2 playing against the knight on h5. However, the position is very interesting and I expect that it will be tested more in the future.

1/2

**G. Kamsky (2673) — A. Goganov (2575)**

Moscow Aeroflot op-A 15th Moscow (8), 08.03.2016

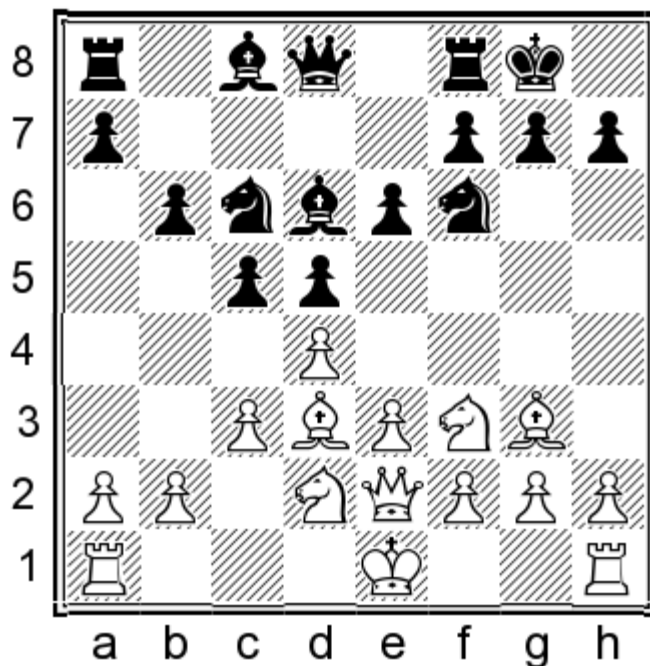
Here comes the third possible way of playing against the classical set-up with ...e6 and the further ...0-0, ...b6. Gata Kamsky, a big "London" expert, chose 9.♚e2!? which has rarely been played before. The move makes a lot of sense, with the aim of better preparing e4 and bringing the rook to d1! The current game greatly reminds us of the game Grischuk A.-Nakamura H. EU cup 2015. In general, the position is unclear, but Black has to be very accurate! In this game Aleksey Goganov made the wrong decision in 13...c4? closing the center at the worst moment after which his

counterplay was very slow on the queenside. Kamsky was given a free hand on the kingside and he crowned his play with a pretty and effective finish.

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 ♗f6 3.e3 c5 4.♗f3**

Our move order is 4.c3 ♗c6 5.♗d2 e6 6.♗gf3 ♘d6 7.♘g3 0-0 8.♘d3 b6 9.♚e2!?

**4...♗c6 5.♗bd2 e6 6.c3 ♘d6 7.♘g3 0-0 8.♘d3 b6 9.♚e2!?**



This move has rarely been played in recent history! The main idea is to prepare e4!

**9...♘b7**

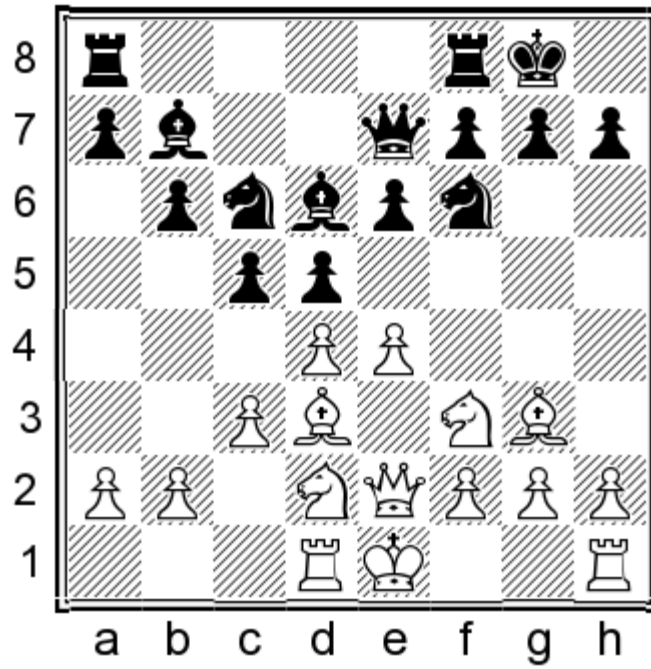
Several times Black has tried 9...♚c7 but after 10.e4! it seems as though Black has serious problems! 10...dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.♘xe4 f5 13.♘xd6 ♚xd6 14.dxc5 ♚xc5 15.♘c2± the e6 pawn is weak, and if Black tries 15...e5? then after 16.♘b3+ ♗h8 17.♗g5→ his king is in great danger!

**10.♚d1**

One more useful move that place the black queen at gunpoint!

**10...♚e8?!**

A dubious move which allows White to develop the initiative! 10...♚e7 was tested once: 11.e4!



11...dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♙xe4 ♖ad8 14.dxc5 ♙xc5 15.0-0 h6?! Sergeev V.-Van den Doel E. Delft Prinsstad op 2014.

(15...♖xd1 16.♖xd1 ♖d8 17.b4 ♙d6 18.♙h4!

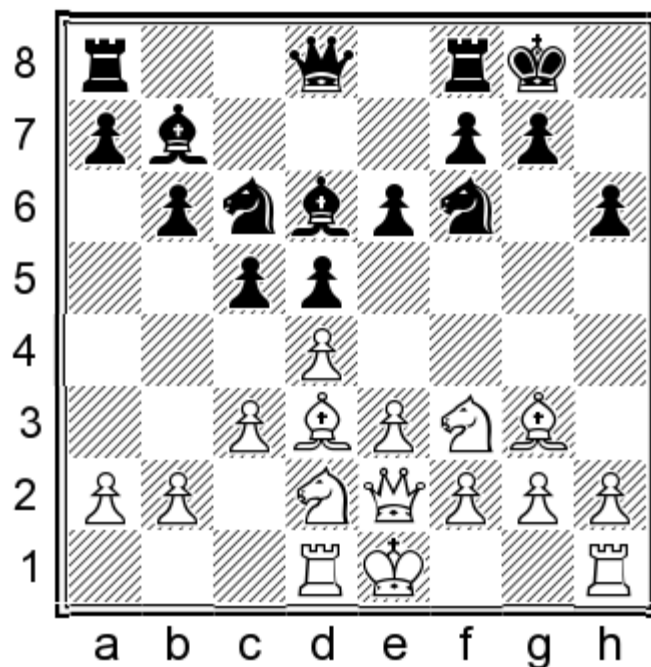
(18.♙xh7+ ♔xh7 19.♚d3+ ♔g8 20.♙xd6 ♚f6))

18...f6 19.♙c2± Black's position is sensitive, especially the e6 pawn and the diagonal b1-h7)

16.♙c2!± with the idea after 16...♖xd1 17.♖xd1 ♖d8 of 18.b4 ♙d6 19.♚d3+;

10...cxd4?! 11.exd4 is a super version of the Carlsbad structure for White. The bishop on b7 has no perspective. The plan is the usual ♘e5-f4-♙h4!

However, Black had a very good option in 10...h6!



with the idea of opposing the e4 move. 11.♙xd6

(11.e4?! ♗xg3! 12.hxg3 cxd4 Now we can see the essence of 10...h6: White doesn't have the intermediate move e5, as the pawn has moved from h7! 13.cxd4 ♘b4! 14.e5 ♘xd3+ 15.♚xd3 ♘e4⚡)

11...♚xd6 12.e4 e5! A very good move. Black should try to exploit the position of White's king in the center! 13.exd5

(13.dxc5 ♚xc5 14.0-0 ♖ad8∞) 13...♘xd5!

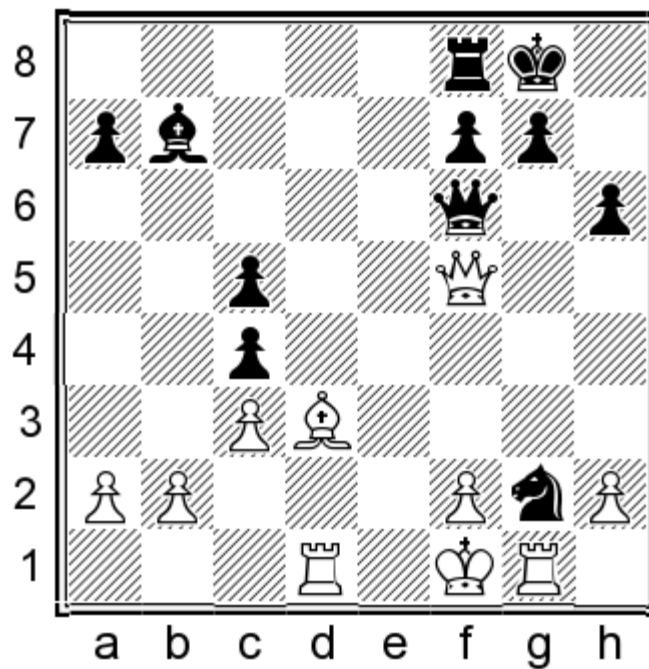
(13...exd4? doesn't work, e.g. 14.dxc6! ♖ae8 15.cxb7 ♖xe2+ 16.♙xe2 d3

(16...♖e8 17.cxd4 cxd4 18.0-0! ♖xe2 19.♖c1 ♘d7 20.♖c8+ ♔h7 21.♖d8+-)

17.♘c4! ♚e6 18.♖xd3 ♚xc4 19.b8=♚! ♖xb8 20.♖d8+ ♖xd8 21.♙xc4+-)

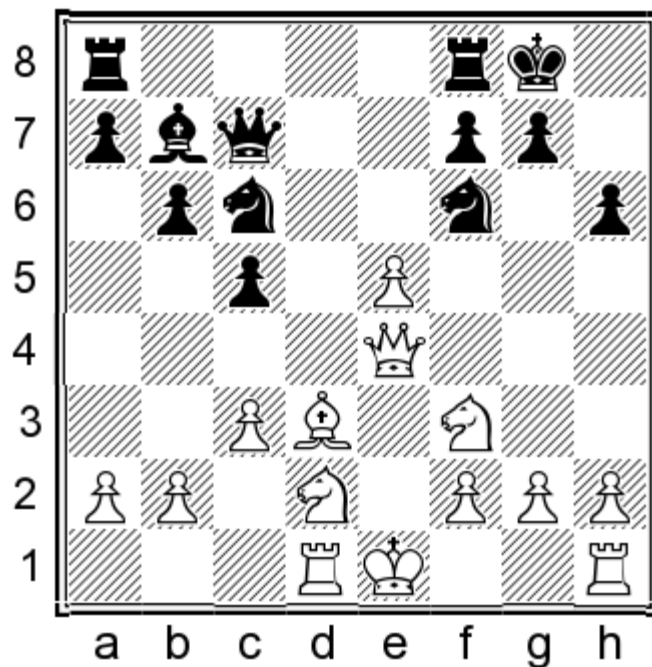
14.dxe5 ♚c7!

(14...♘xe5? 15.♘xe5 ♘f4 16.♘dc4! ♚f6 17.♚g4 ♘xg2+ 18.♔f1 ♖ad8 19.♖g1 b5 20.♘d7 ♖xd7 21.♚xd7 bxc4 22.♚f5!



A nice defensive move which leads to a much better rook endgame! 22...cxd3 23.♚xf6 gxf6 24.♖xd3 ♖e8 25.♖xg2+ ♙xg2+ 26.♔xg2 ♖e2 27.♖d8+ ♔g7 28.♖b8±)

15.♚e4 ♘f6!



An important move which holds Black's position! 16. ♖f4

a) 16. ♖f5? ♜xe5! 17. ♜xe5 ♜fe8 18. ♜dc4 (18.f4? ♙c8-+) 18...b5! 19.0-0 bxc4 20. ♜xc4 ♙c8! 21. ♖f3 ♙g4-+;

b) 16. exf6? ♜fe8 17.0-0 ♜xe4 18. ♜xe4 g6-;

16... ♜d5 17. ♖g3

(17. ♖e4 ♜f6=)

17... ♜ae8 18.0-0 ♜xe5 19. ♜xe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 21. ♜c4 ♜e6 22. ♜fe1 ♜xe1+ 23. ♜xe1 ♜f4 24. ♙f1 ♜e6 25. ♜d1 ♜d8 26. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8=

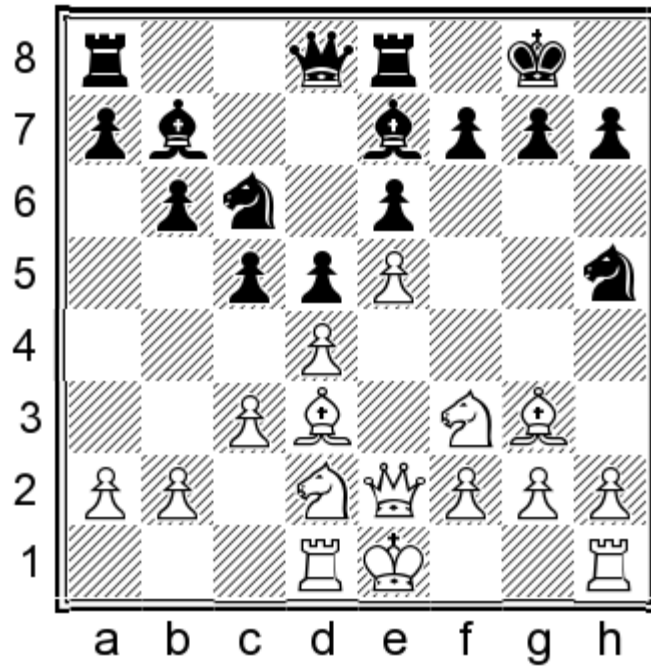
### 11.e4! ♙e7

Black was not prepared to react in the center and it highlights the shortcomings of 10... ♜e8?! After the logical 11... dxe4, with a series of forced moves White achieves a clear advantage 12. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 13. ♙xe4 cxd4 14. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 15. ♜xd4 ♙d5 16.0-0 ♙xg3 (16... ♙c5 17. ♜d3 ♖g5 18.h4 ♖f6 19. ♙xd5 exd5 20. ♖d1±) 17.hxg3 ♖g5 18. ♙xd5 exd5 19. ♖d2±;

The reaction in the center with 11...e5 is not so good because Black is still not ready for it. 12.dxc5! ♙xc5 13.0-0 d4 Black is forced on this in view of exd! (13... dxe4? 14. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 15. ♖xe4 g6 16. ♙c4 ♖e7 17. ♙d5±) 14.cxd4 ♜xd4 15. ♜xd4 exd4 (15... ♙xd4 16. ♜b3±) 16.a3 a5 17. ♜fe1± The pawn d4 is well-blocked and is actually weak. White's plan is to play e5 at a favorable moment!

### 12.e5 ♜h5

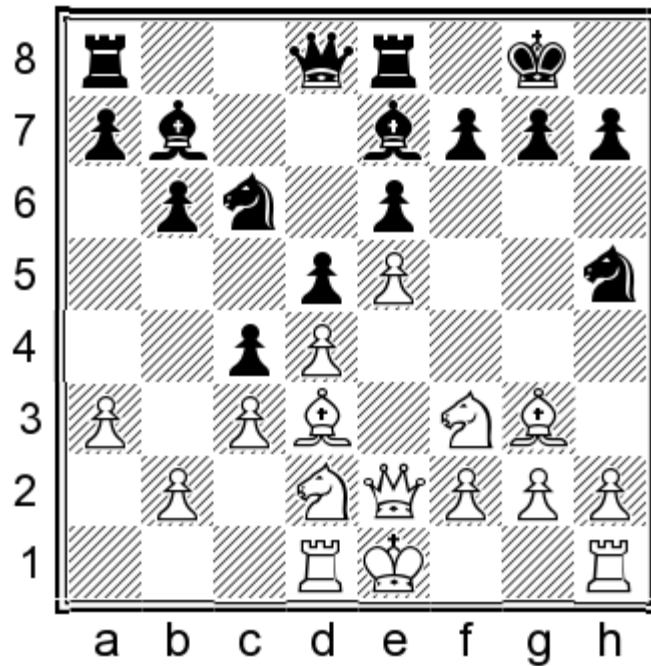
Now we have a similar position as in the game Grischuk A.-Nakamura H. EU cup 2015. with ♜d1-♖e2 and ♜e8-♙b7 inserted. It seems like a better version for White.



13.a3

White needed to play this to prevent the idea  $cd-\text{b}4!$

13...c4?±



Very rarely can this be good and I am not a big fan of this kind of move. With a stable center, the attack is much easier for White. Black should seek counterplay with 13...a5! 14.  $\text{b}1$ f1 (14.h4 cxd4 15.cxd4  $\text{c}3$ xg3 16.fxg3 f5!  $\text{z}$ ) 14...  $\text{c}8$  idea is  $\text{a}6$  15.h4  $\text{a}6$  16.  $\text{h}2$   $\text{d}3$  17.  $\text{d}3$  f5.

14.  $\text{b}1$  g6

Defending the knight against the ♖g5 idea.

15. ♖f1!

A famous move with the idea ♖e3-♖g4 Here the idea from the game Grischuk A. -Nakamura H. also works: 15.h4!? ♖xg3 16.fxg3→

15...b5 16. ♖e3 a5 17. ♖g4 b4

The counterplay on the queenside is too slow and White doesn't need to worry about it.

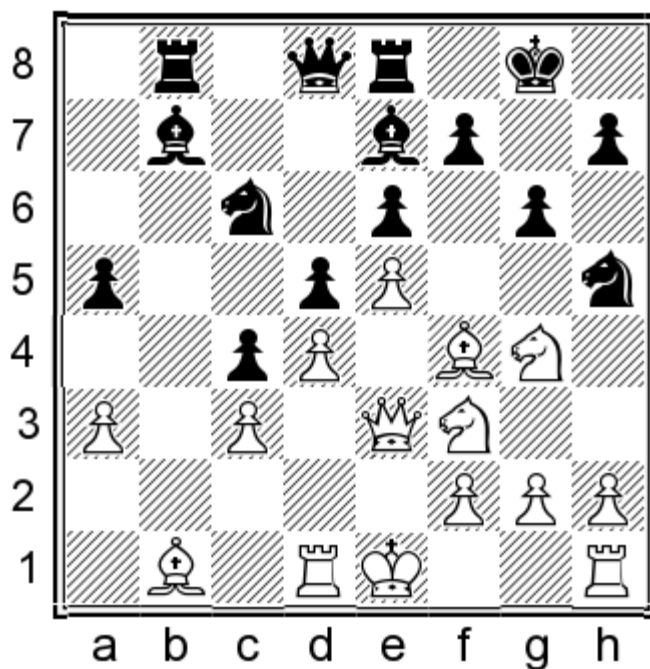
18. ♕e3!

Another nice move with the idea of ♕f4!

18...bxc3 19.bxc3 ♖b8

Dealing with the unimportant pawn leads to a quick loss. 19...♕xa3 20. ♖h6+ ♔g7 21. ♕h4 ♕e7 22. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 23.g4+→

20. ♕f4!



The forgotten bishop comes into the game with a mission to exchange himself for his colleague, further weakening the dark squares around the black king.

20...♕c8 21. ♕g5 ♖b3 22.h4!

The attractive 22. ♖h6+ gives hope to Black 22...♔g7 23.g4?! f6⇒

22...♖b6 23. ♕c2 ♖xa3?

Black should keep his bishop with 23...♕f8±

24. ♕xe7+– ♖xe7 25. ♖h6

Now the position is completely lost! There is no defense against ♖g5 or ♖f6!

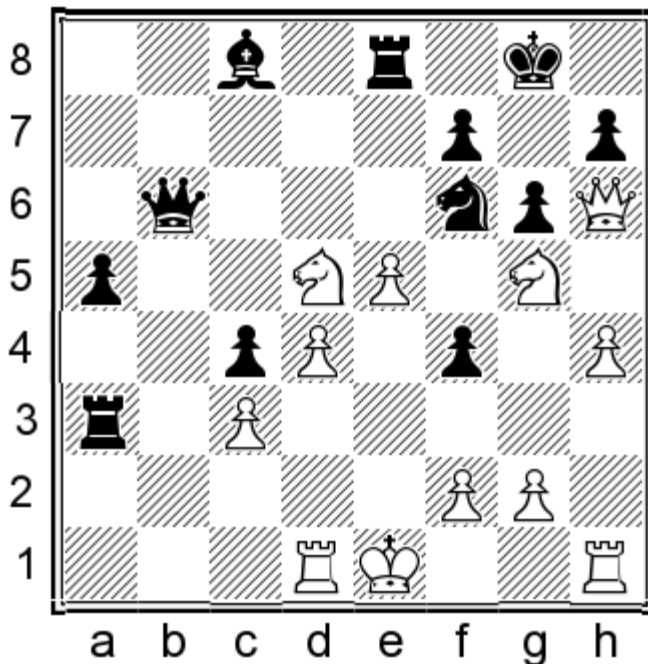
25... ♖f5 26. ♗xf5 exf5 27. ♖g5 ♖f6□

A good try but it doesn't help!

28. ♖e3

28. ♖xf6+?! ♗xf6 29. ♗xh7+ ♔f8±

28... f4 29. ♖xd5!



29... ♗d8 30. 0-0

An elegant finish to the game and well played by Gata! Conclusion: The rarely played 9. ♗e2!? is very interesting and looks like an improved version of the 9. e4- ♗e7 continuation. It seems like White has more useful moves than Black, before he starts to play the further e4! Black must always be on top of things to keep the balance! In the game after the push e4-e5, the key move was 15. ♖f1! White shouldn't castle short so quickly, because the rook on h1 is necessary for action with h4, and also after Black's ... ♖g3!

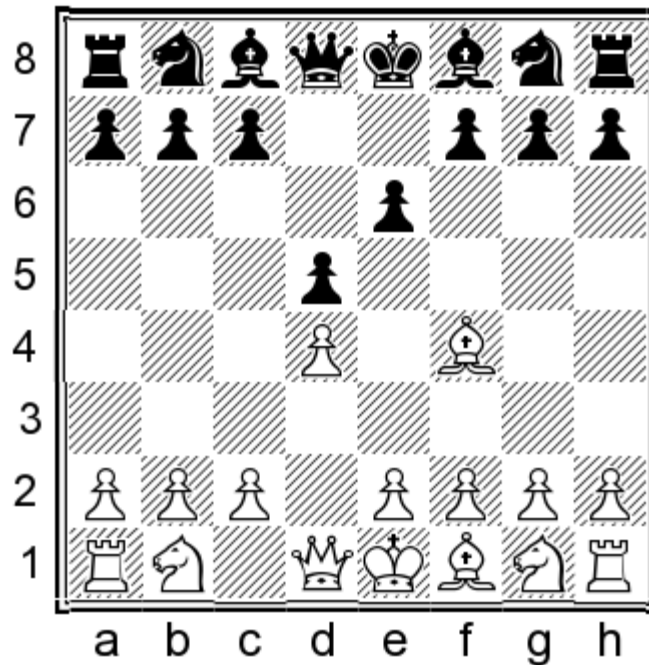
1-0

# CHAPTER FIVE

## EARLY ...e6

In this chapter the variations are similar to positions from the previous chapter with certain differences. Those differences could be in delaying Black with the move c5 or in developing the knight from b8. In general it doesn't change the plans for White too much because the structures are the same. In the London System you have to play mostly by understanding the ideas.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 e6



3.e3 ♗d6

Another option is 3...♗f6 4.♗d2 c5 5.c3 ♗e7 which is the old and passive treatment that was punished by Vlatko Kovacevic (5...♗c6 6.♗g3 -CHAPTER) 6.♗gf3 0-0 7.♗d3 ♗bd7 8.h4! See Kovacevic V.-Ree H. Maribor 1980.

4.♗g3!

Again the best reaction against the ...♗d6 idea! Also tested was 4.♗xd6 cxd6! (4...♗xd6?! 5.♗g4!±) 5.♗g4 and now the point is 5...♗f6! after which Black achieves good compensation for the pawn! 6.♗xg7 ♗g8 7.♗h6 ♗g6 8.♗f4 ♗b6 9.b3 ♗c7! 10.♗f3 (10.♗d3 e5 11.♗h4 e4 12.♗b5+ ♗d7 13.♗xd7+ ♗bxd7↑; 10.c3 e5 11.♗h4 ♗f5↑) 10...♗xc2 11.♗bd2 ♗e7! 12.g3 ♗g4 13.♗h6 ♗g6 14.♗h4 ♗g4=

4...♗f6

Very solid is 4...♗xg3 5.hxg3 ♗f6 6.♗d2 ♗e7 7.♗gf3 ♗bd7 8.c3 e5 9.dxe5 ♗xe5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 and now the best chance for an advantage is the endgame after 11.♗a4+ c6 12.♗f4! ♗xf4 13.gxf4 -see Sedlak N.-Ascic P. Bosnjaci 2006.

4...♗e7 5.c3 ♗h6!? 6.♗d2 -see Sedlak N.-Abramovic B. Vrnjacka Banja 2012.

## 5. ♖d2 0-0 6. ♘d3!

The move order is very important here as always in the “London”.

## 6...c5

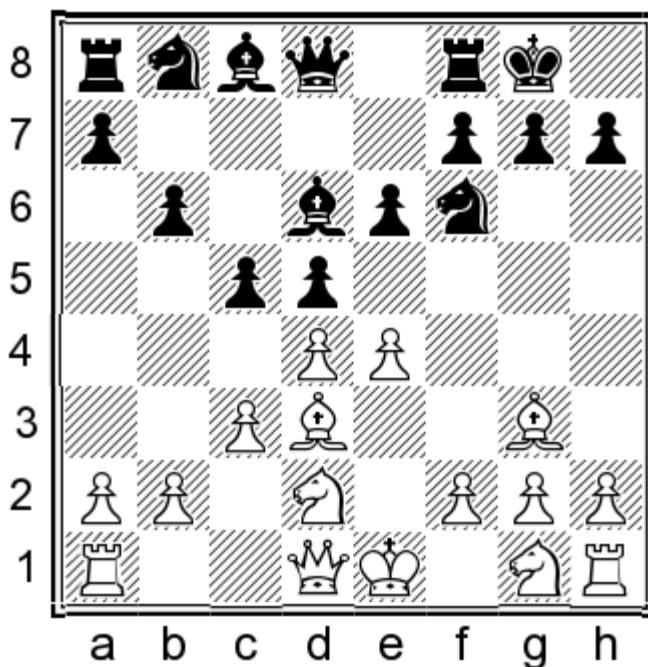
For Black it is almost always possible to play the plan with 6...b6!? 7. ♘gf3 (Preventing ...♗a6 brings another type of problem. 7. ♖e2 ♗b7 8. ♘gf3 ♘e4! and Black wins the battle for the e4 square!) 7...♗b7 (7... ♗a6 8. ♗xa6 ♘xa6 9. c3 Black exchanged important white bishop, but now he has to lose time to return the knight into play. 9...c5 10. ♖e2 ♘b8 11. e4! with some pressure) 8. ♘e5 ♘e4 (8... ♘bd7 9. ♖f3! with play on the kingside. Covering the e4 square is always important!) 9. ♖h5!? f5 10. ♘xe4 fxe4 11. ♗b5 c6 12. ♗e2 c5 13. ♗g4 ♖e8 14. ♖h3↑ Heberla B.-Pinkas K. Katowice 2015.

## 7.c3 b6

Here Black tries to exchange the white-squared bishops but it is not possible after White’s next move! 7...♘c6 8. ♘gf3 — is a transposition to CHAPTER 4.

## 8.e4!±

Again the position is very similar to positions from CHAPTER 4. but without ♘f3-♘c6! which is a better version for White -see Grachev B — Timofeev A. RUS ch rapid 2015.



### Kovacevic — Ree

Maribor 30/112 Maribor 30/112, 1980

In the first game of this chapter Black chose a very passive set-up with an early ...e6 putting the bishop on e7, which provoked our “London maestro” to show his attacking skills. With the very aggressive approach 8.h4! Vlatko Kovacevic showed how you have to punish passive play!

## 1.d4 ♘f6

Our move order would be: 1...d5 2. ♗f4 ♘f6 3. e3 e6 4. ♖d2 c5 5. c3 ♗e7 6. ♘gf3 0-0 7. ♗d3 ♘bd7 [chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

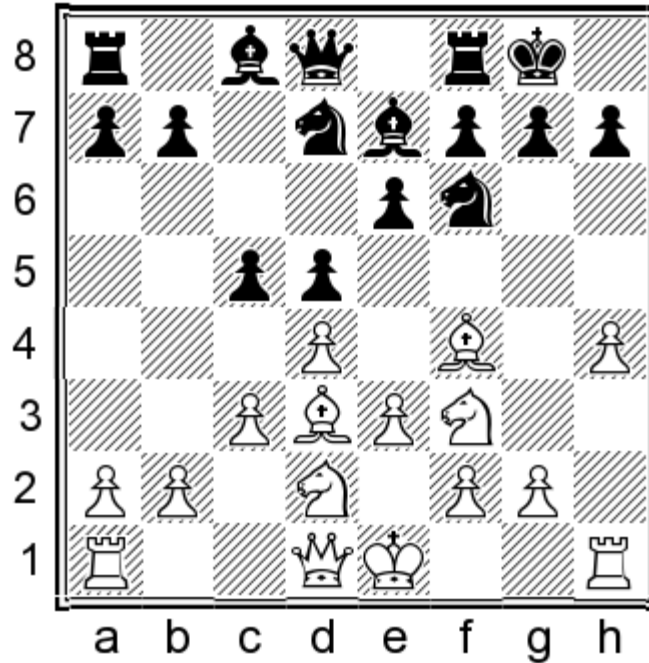
2.♟f3 d5 3.♞f4 e6 4.♜bd2 c5 5.e3 ♞e7?!

This is the most passive plan for Black and not to be recommended! Black gives up the fight for the center and the e5 square. The natural move is 5...♞d6.

6.c3 0-0 7.♞d3 ♜bd7

By putting the knight on d7, Black's main idea is to play ...b6-...♞b7-...♜e4 taking the e4 square under his control.

8.h4!

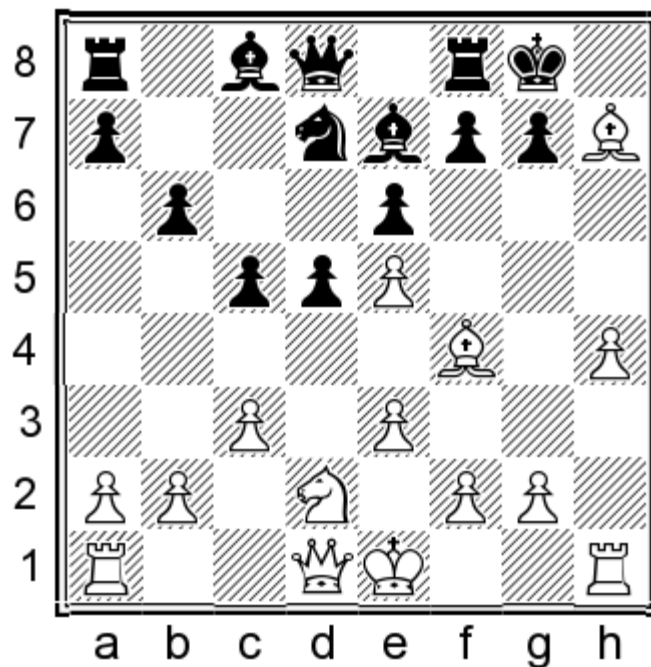


A very good and aggressive approach which is based on an attack on the black king. After this move, the Black's whole concept comes into a question! After the typical 8.♜e5 ♜xe5 9.dxe5 ♜d7 and Black has in his arsenal moves such as ...f6 or ...f5 in facing the threats on his king.

8...b6 9.♜e5 ♜xe5?

It's hard to believe, but this loses by force mostly thanks to 8.h4! Natural was 9...♞b7 10.♞f3! protecting the e4 square is always very important! 10...♞c8 (10...♜xe5 11.dxe5 ♜d7 12.♞g4 f5 13.exf6 ♞xf6 14.♜f3→) 11.♞h3→, White has a clear plan of attacking the black king, while it's not easy to find appropriate counterplay for Black.

10.dxe5 ♜d7 11.♞xh7+!!



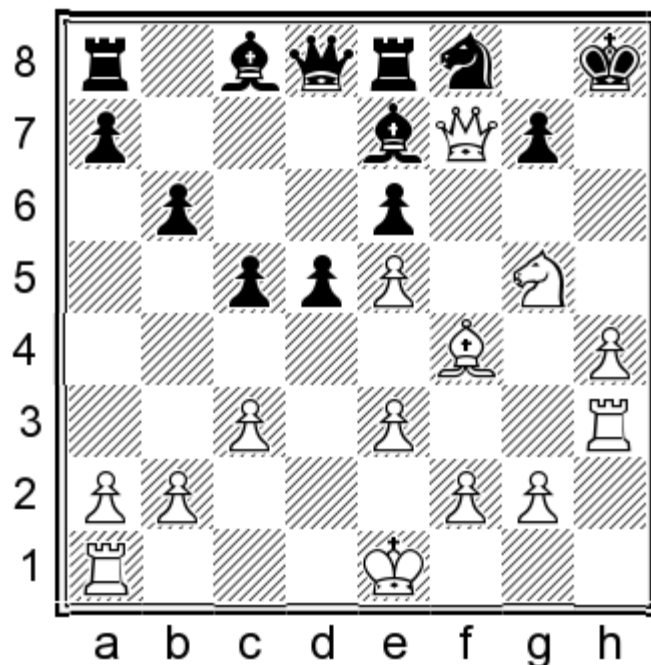
The knight is far from the g5 square, but this typical sacrifice works here anyway! White has enough time to add the knight to the attack.

11...♙xh7 12.♚h5+ ♔g8 13.♘f3 f6

The following lines show White's attacking resources! 13...♙a6 14.♞d1! preventing ...♙d3 and continuing the attack as in the game!

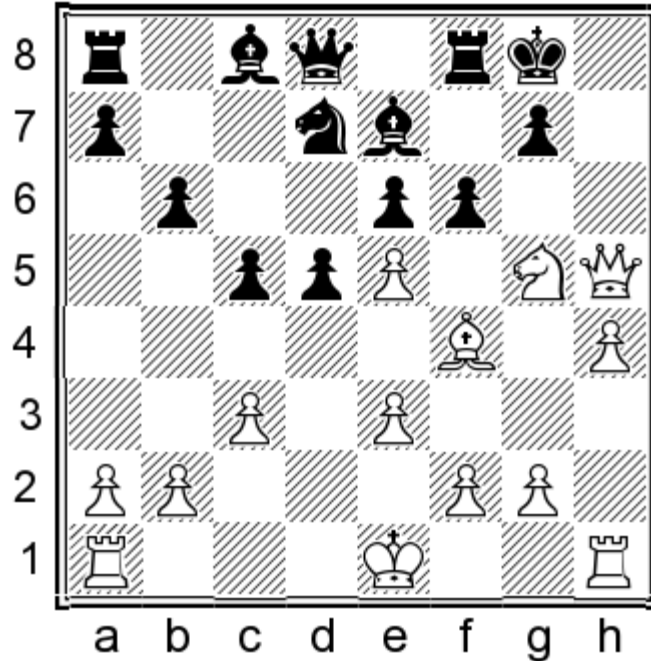
13...g6 14.♚h6 ♜e8 15.♘g5 ♘f8 16.h5+-;

13...♞e8 14.♘g5 ♘f8 15.♚xf7+ ♔h8 16.♞h3!



16...♚d7 17.♚h5+ ♔g8 18.♘f7 ♙d8 19.♚h8+! ♙xf7 20.♞f3+-

14. ♖g5!+-



The attack goes like a song

14...fxg5 15.hxg5 ♖f5!

Making space for a king escape! 15...♞xf4? 16.♞h8+ ♔f7 17.g6+ ♔xg6 18.♞h5#;  
 15...♙xg5 16.♙xg5 ♞c7 (16...♞e8 17.♞h7+ ♔f7 18.♞h4+-) 17.f4+-

16.♞h7+ ♔f7

16...♔f8 17.♞g6! ♔g8 18.♞h7 ♙f8 19.♞h5+-

17.g6+ ♔e8 18.♞xg7

Two pieces are powerless in relation to the g-pawn and that shows also in the following lines!

18...♙f8

18...♞f8 19.♞h8 ♠ ♞f7# 19...♗xe5 20.♞xe5! ♙f6 21.g7! ♙xg7 22.♞xg7 ♞xh8 23.♞xh8+ ♔d7 24.♞e5+-;  
 18...♗f8 19.♞h8 ♔d7 20.g7 ♗g6 21.♞xd8+- ♠ g8=♞

19.♞h8! ♞g5□

There is no other way to prevent g7!

20.♞g8!

A nice move with a double threat, but the main one is ♞f7 mate!

20...♗xe5

Black was forced into this to avoid mate! 20...♖e7 21.♗h7+-

21.♗xe5 ♔d7 22.♗h8!

Clearly the best! 22.♗h7+?! is still not a win 22...♗e7 23.♖g7 ♔c6±

22...♗b7

22...♗xe5 23.g7+-;

22...♗e7 23.♖h7+-

23.♖h7+

GM Vlatko Kovacevic led the attack with surgical precision. Conclusion: If you think that it is possible to play passively against the “London”, you are wrong! Passive play is something this opening does not tolerate as this game clearly showed. With an early 8.h4! in the opening, connected with ♗h7 and ♗h3 ideas, doubts are cast on Black’s limp plan in the opening.

1-0

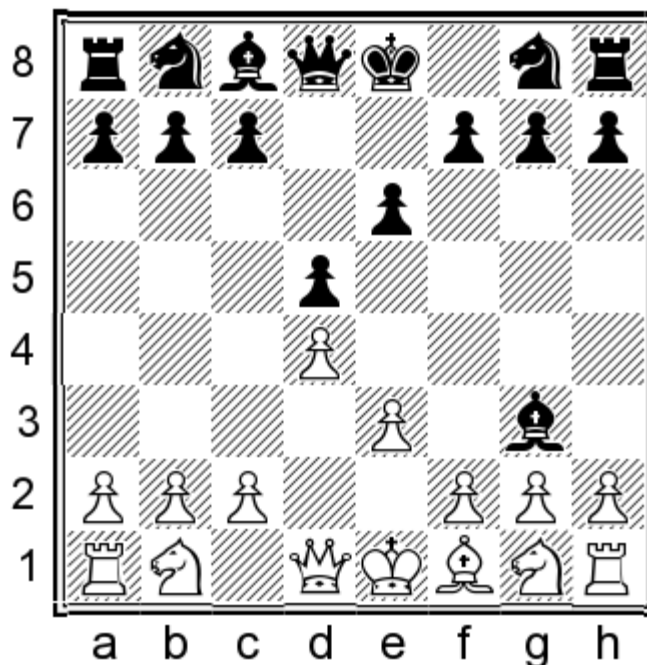
**N. Sedlak (2512) — P. Ascic (2348)**

Bosnjaci op-A 12th Bosnjaci (2), 04.01.2006

Compared to the previous game, my opponent chose a plan with an early 3...♗d6 aiming to play a quick ... e5! Against this set-up it is hard to prevent ...e5, but White has the possibility to seek an advantage with the queen maneuver ♖a4-♖f4 offering an endgame! My opponent accepted the endgame, which was the most logical decision, and after a long fight, I finally won with the help of my opponent’s impatience.

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 e6 3.e3 ♗d6 4.♗g3 ♗xg3

Like I said before, I am not a big fan of this kind of moves!



### 5.hxg3 ♘f6 6.♗d2 ♚e7 7.♗gf3

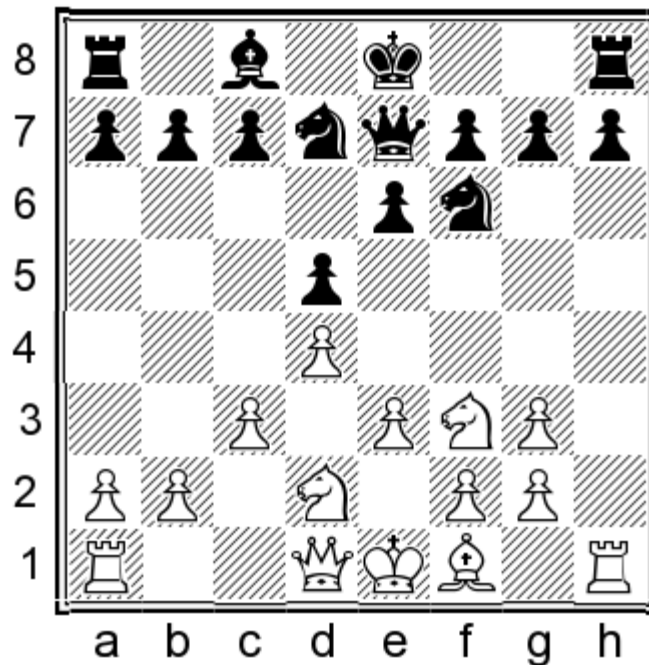
In the game I chose to play a solid and, for me, known position. This was one of my first games in the “London” so at that time I was not so brave about using my ‘feel’ a lot. I was not sure of the typical 7.f4!? because of my doubled pawns on the g-file! I was a little bit afraid of moves like 7...h5 which I couldn’t evaluate. Now, after many years of experience, I don’t believe so much in 7.f4.

For example: 8.♗e2 forcing Black into the unusual move 8...♚f8 and after 9.c3 ♘c6! with the idea ...♗e7-♗f5 10.♗f3 ♗d7 11.e4 (11.♚e2 0-0-0 12.e4 dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♚d6= Black has too many options, moves such as ...h4 or ...f6-♗e7-♗c6) 11...dxe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♗xe4 0-0-0 14.♗f3 (14.♗xh5 is risky 14...♗xh5 15.♚xh5 ♗xd4! 16.cxd4 ♚b4+ 17.♗f1 ♗b5+ 18.♗e2 g6 19.♚f3 ♚xd4⇒ with the very unpleasant threat of ...♗h8!) 14...f6 and I don’t believe White has an advantage!

### 7...♗bd7

It’s clear that Black is playing for ...e5!

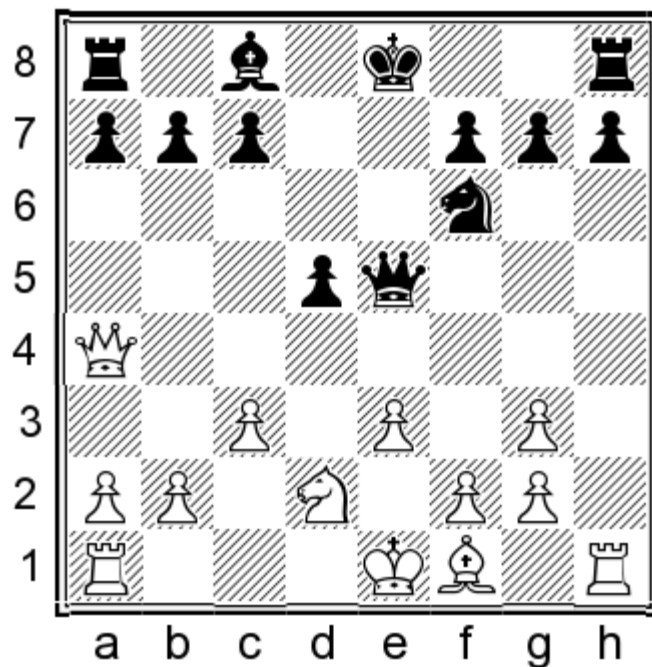
### 8.c3



Against ...e5 there is always the interesting 8.♗e5 but here it doesn’t work very well after 8...♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♗d7 10.f4 ♚c5! 11.♗f2 d4 12.♗c4 dxe3+ 13.♗xe3 ♗b6 and this looks OK for Black.

### 8...e5! 9.dxe5 ♗xe5 10.♗xe5 ♚xe5 11.♚a4+!

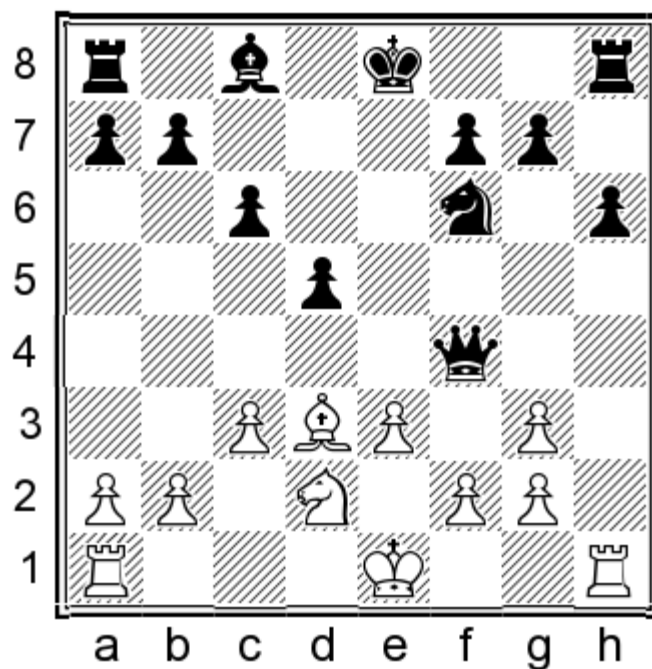
Searching for the queen’s best position with tempo, transferring her to the f4 square and offering an endgame!



11...c6

11...♔d7 is similar to the game 12.♚f4 ♚xf4 13.gxf4±

12.♔d3 h6 13.♚f4 ♚xf4



Black enters a slightly passive endgame, but one with no weaknesses. He could also play 13...♚e7 to keep the queens on the board! 14.♘f3! white can firstly improve his knight's position (14.0-0-0 ♔e6 15.f3 0-0-0 16.g4 (16.♔b1 g5! 17.♚a4 ♔b8 18.g4 ♔c8 19.♚he1 h5 20.gxh5 ♚xh5=) 16...d4! 17.exd4 ♘d5 18.♚e5 ♘xc3! 19.bxc3 ♚a3+ 20.♔c2 ♚xa2±) 14...♔d7 15.♘d4± and it's not clear what Black can do with his king! Always risky is 15...0-0 (It's not possible to play 15...0-0-0? 16.♘f5 ♔xf5 17.♔xf5+ ♘d7 18.♚d4±) 16.0-0-0 with constant calculations around ♚h6 and g4-g5!

#### 14.gxf4±

White's better structure promises a long-term advantage by taking space on the kingside.

#### 14...♔d7

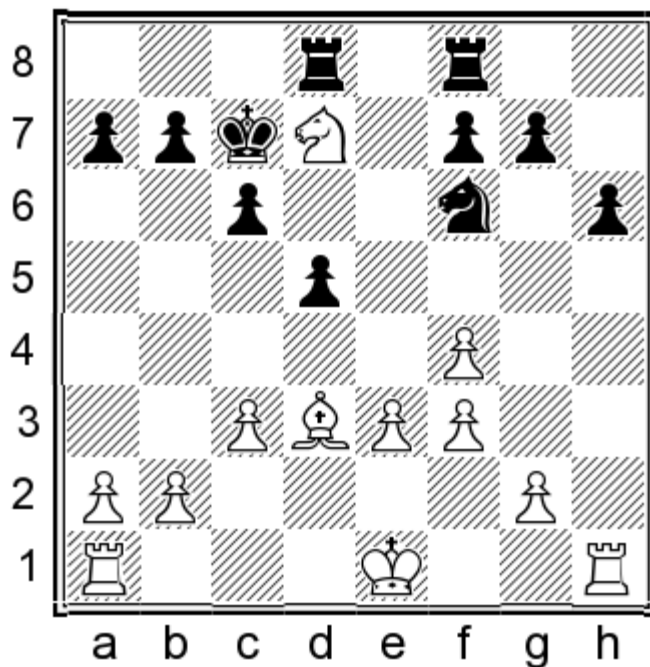
Before the move f3 it's necessary first to improve the knight's position.

#### 15.♟f3 0-0-0 16.♞e5 ♜hf8 17.f3

I was very happy with my position here. The massive pawns on the kingside offer a lot of possibilities. For example to play for g4-g5, or to play for e4.

#### 17...♞c7 18.♞xd7!?

This was the hardest decision in the game. The knight was nice on e5, but after ...♞c8-...♞e8 and a later ...f6 I didn't see any good prospects for the knight. In the future I had an idea to open the position with e4 after which the bishop could become dominant over the knight.



#### 18...♜xd7 19.♞f2 a5

Black takes a space on the other flank.

#### 20.♜ae1 ♜e8 21.g4

Slowly, threats appear.

#### 21...♜de7

Preventing e4 and making space for the knight on d7.

#### 22.♜e2 ♞b6

Black plays 'into space' and doesn't use his chance to improve the position of the knight with 22...♞d7 and next comes ...♞c5

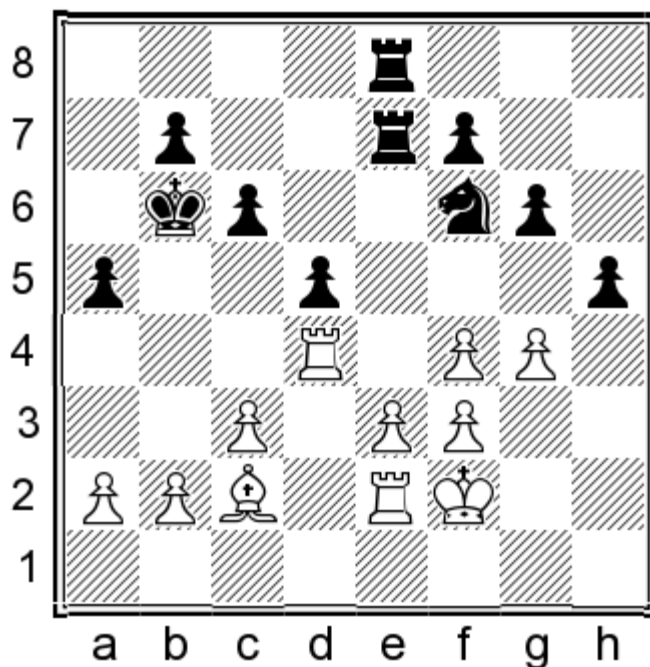
23.♞h1 ♞d8 24.♞c2 ♜c5 25.♞d1

There is no need to hurry: the threat is stronger than the execution.

25...♞de8 26.♞d4 ♜b6 27.♞f5 g6?!

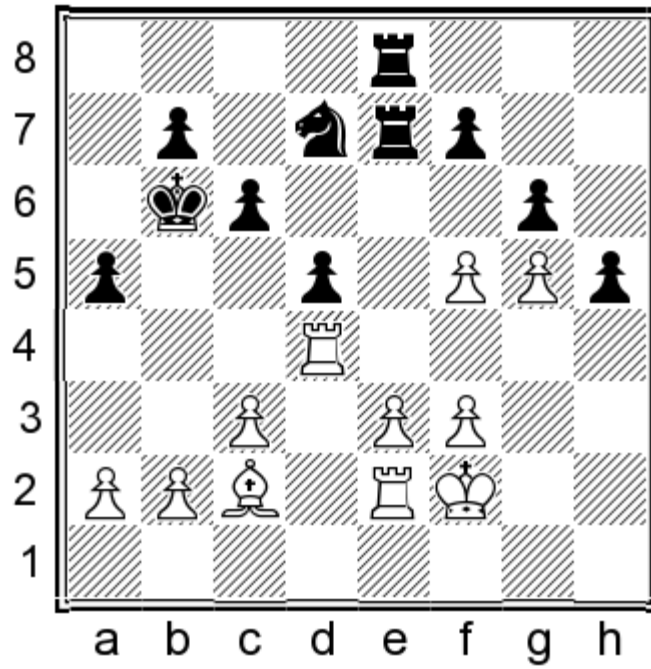
Black loses patience. 27...♜c7± would continue the waiting strategy.

28.♞c2 h5?



This extra weakening will prove fatal to Black. Much better was to play 28...g5 29.♞e1 c5 30.♞dd1 gxf4 31.exf4 ♞xe1 32.♞xe1 ♞xe1 33.♜xe1 ♜c6 34.♜f2 b5 35.g5 hxg5 36.fxg5 ♞d7 37.f4± and Black has chances for a draw — but he needs to fight hard for it!

29.g5 ♞d7 30.f5±



Now Black's pawn structure starts to be ruined.

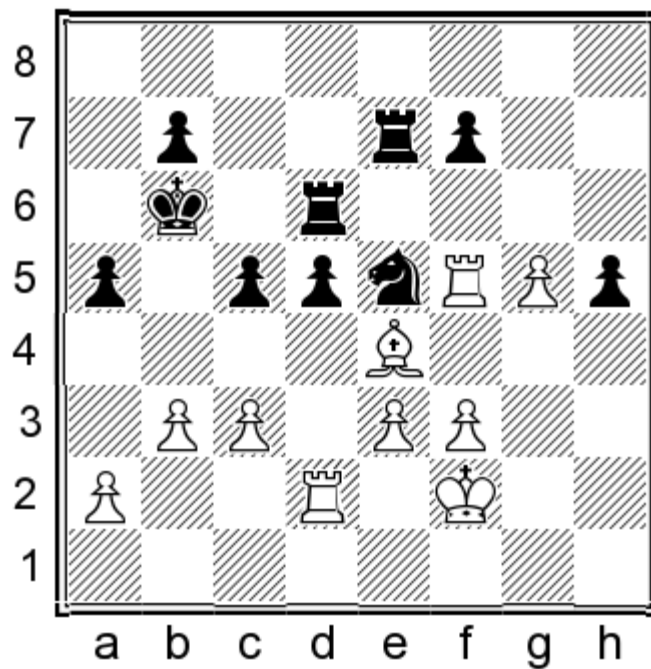
**30...gxf5 31.♖f4 ♜e5 32.b3!**

The pawn on f5 can't run away!

**32...c5?!**

Black starts his active play too late, now simply creating new weaknesses.

**33.♞d2 ♞d8 34.♞xf5+- ♞d6 35.♙e4**



Strong enough! Here I could win quicker with 35.c4 d4 36.exd4 cxd4 (36...♞xd4 37.♞e2 ♜c6 38.♞xe7 ♜xe7

39. ♖xf7+-) 37.c5+! ♕xc5 38.f4+-

35... ♖g4+

35... ♖ed7 doesn't save Black, e.g. 36. ♖xe5 dxe4 37. ♖xd6+ ♖xd6 38. ♖xe4 ♖d2+ 39. ♕g3 ♖xa2 40. ♖f4 ♖b2 41. ♖xf7+-  
Also losing is 35... ♕c6 36. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 37.c4 ♖d3+ 38. ♕f1

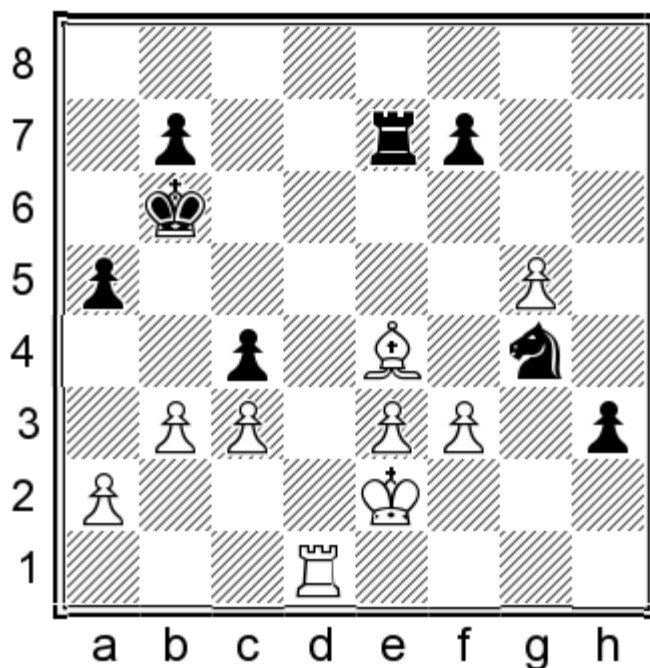
36. ♕e2?!

I really don't know why I was not happy with 36.fxg4 ♖xe4 37.gxh5 ♖h4 38.h6+-

36...h4

Now Black gains some small hopes with his h-pawn!

37. ♖fxd5 ♖xd5 38. ♖xd5 h3 39. ♖d1 c4!

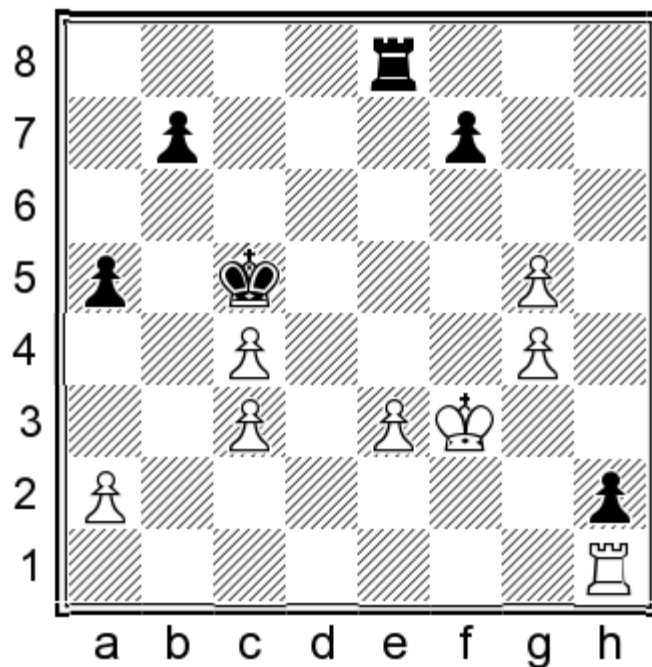


Black doesn't have to lose anything and plays in the most active way, hoping to make draw in the rook endgame.

40.bxc4 ♕c5 41. ♖h1 h2 42.fxg4

From the nice structure, now just doubled pawns are left, but I have the bigger number of them!

42... ♖xe4 43. ♕f3 ♖e8?



Passive play in rook endgames doesn't bring success. Black could search for better chances with 43...♖xc4! 44.♖xh2 ♔d6!±

**44.♖xh2 ♔xc4 45.♖h7 ♖f8 46.♔f4 ♔xc3 47.e4?!**

Losing time and very slack play in a winning position. 47.♔f5! b5 48.♔f6 b4 49.♖xf7 ♖xf7+ 50.♔xf7 a4 51.g6 b3 52.axb3 axb3 53.g7 b2 54.g8=♚ b1=♚ 55.♚h8+ ♔d2 56.♚d4+-

**47...b5**

Now follow the calculations!

**48.♔f5 b4 49.♔f6 a4 50.♖xf7 ♖b8**

Black couldn't save the game in the queen endgame after 50...♖xf7+ 51.♔xf7 b3 52.axb3 axb3 53.g6 b2 54.g7 b1=♚ 55.g8=♚ ♚xe4 56.♚c8+-

**51.♖h7**

Unnecessary again. Black's b-pawn can't run away. 51.g6! b3 52.axb3 axb3 53.♖c7+ ♔d2 54.♖h7 b2 55.♖h1 b1=♚ 56.♖xb1 ♖xb1 57.g7 ♖b6+ 58.♔f7 ♖b7+ 59.♔g6 ♖b6+ 60.♔h7 ♖b7 61.♔h8+-

**51...♔d4**

White is much faster after 51...b3 52.axb3 axb3 53.e5 b2 54.♖h1 b1=♚ 55.♖xb1 ♖xb1 56.g6 ♖f1+ 57.♔g5+-

**52.♖a7**

Now all the Black counterplay has disappeared and the rest of the game was just delaying a handshake.

**52...a3 53.g6 ♔c3 54.♖h7 ♔d4 55.g7 b3 56.axb3 ♔xe4 57.♖h1**

Conclusion: The plan which Black used in this game is very solid! In general you don't have a better option than

forcing an endgame with the maneuver ♖a4-♖f4 and to play it with great patience! For players who prefers endgames with a clear plan and a small space advantage, this will be a huge pleasure for them!

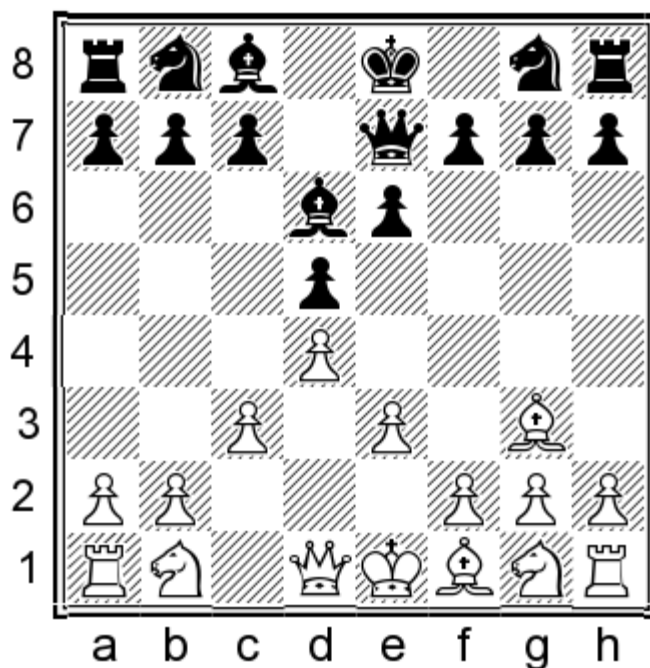
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**N. Sedlak (2593) — B. Abramovic (2460)**

SRB-ch Vrnjacka Banja (4), 26.04.2012

Compared with the previous game, Black changed his plan here with 4...♖e7 and ♘h6!? To follow, bringing the knight to f5. However, it doesn't change much about White's concept in reply. At some point, Black wandered from his plan and later he missed a chance to castle short, after which he didn't get another chance! His King was left in the center, unsafe, and the black rooks were left without co-ordination! After 19.e4 and the opening of the e-file, Black's king couldn't find a safe home and in the end the price was very high!

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 e6 3.e3 ♘d6 4.♘g3! ♖e7 5.c3



You have to be careful with move orders: 5.♘f3? ♘xg3 6.hxg3 ♖b4+ 7.♘bd2 ♖xb2

5...♘h6!?

An original idea from the old 'classical' player, entering the knight into play on f5!

6.♘d2

6.♘d3 allows easy equality after 6...♘c6! (6...♘f5 7.♘xf5 exf5 8.♘xd6 ♖xd6 9.♖f3 0-0 10.♘e2 ♘e6 11.♘d2 ♘d7 12.♘f4± with a typical Trompowsky position) 7.♘f3 e5 8.dxe5 ♘xe5 9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♖xe5=

6...♘d7

It seems like Black has wandered from his plan, mixing ...♘f5 and ...e5 ideas. Very logical was to continue firstly with the idea 6...♘f5 after which changing the structure with 7.e4!? always deserves serious attention! 7...dxe4 8.♘xe4 this structure reminds us a lot of the French Defence-Rubinstein Variation, with an unusual placement of the minor pieces.

It's very important that moves like 8...e5 don't work well after 9.dxe5 ♖xg3 (9...♙xe5 10.♙xe5 ♜xe5 11.♙d3± with ♗f3 next) 10.♗xd6+ cxd6 11.hxg3 dxe5 12.♞c2 h6 13.♗f3 ♗c6 (13...e4 14.♗d4 0-0 15.0-0-0 ♗c6 16.♙c4± and Black will have problems with his e4 pawn.) 14.♙b5 0-0 15.0-0± with the simple plan of ♞fe1-♞ad1.

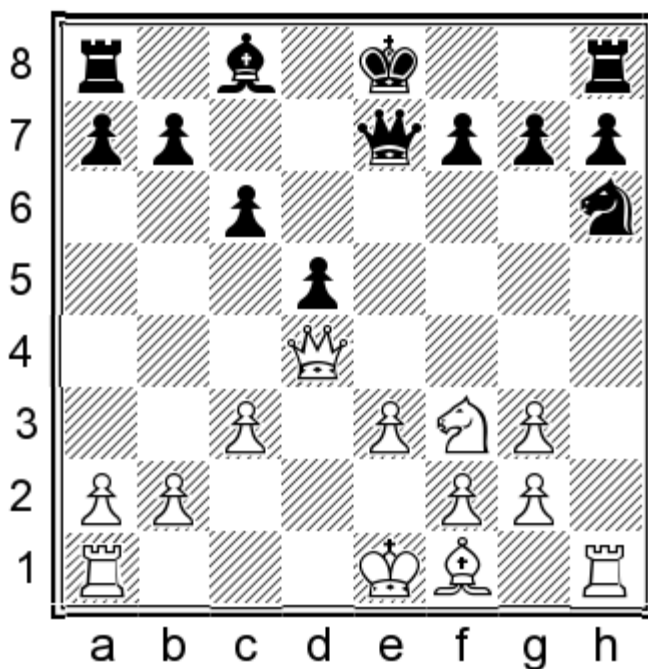
### 7.♗gf3 e5

Black decides to delay ...♗f5 as going for the bishop pair doesn't solve his problems! 7...♗f5 8.e4! (8.♙xd6 ♗xd6 9.♙d3 e5 10.dxe5 ♗xe5 11.♗xe5 ♞xe5=; 8.♙d3 ♗xg3 9.hxg3 e5 10.dxe5 ♗xe5 11.♗xe5 ♙xe5 12.♗f3 ♙f6=) 8...dxe4 (8...♗xg3 9.hxg3 e5 10.♞c2 dxe4 11.♗xe4 exd4 12.0-0-0 dxc3 13.♞e1 cxb2+ 14.♙b1→) 9.♗xe4 b6 10.♙d3 ♙b7 11.♞e2 ♗xg3 12.hxg3 h6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♙a6±

### 8.dxe5 ♗xe5 9.♗xe5 ♙xe5 10.♗f3 ♙xg3 11.hxg3

Once again the h-file is opened!

### 11...c6 12.♞d4!±



And once again the queen comes to f4, this time via d4!

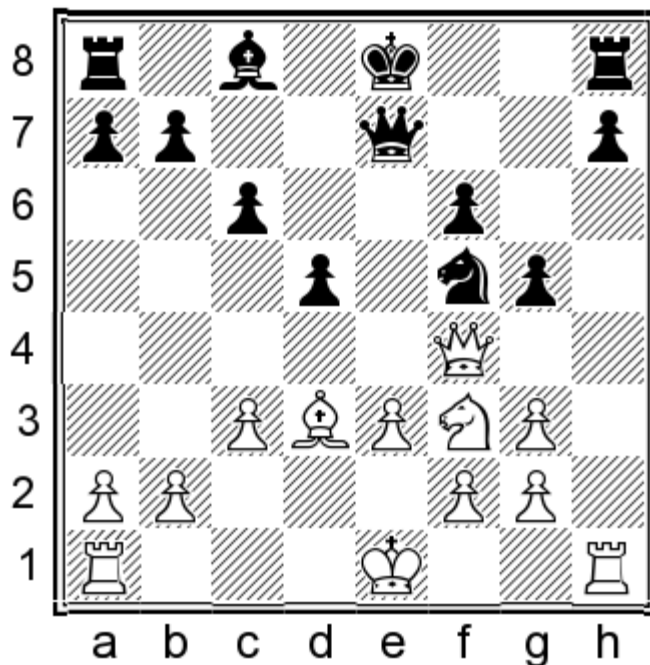
### 12...♗f5?!

This human move is dubious. The computer, without any fear, proposes 12...0-0!? which seems suicidal! 13.♙d3 (A positional exchange sacrifice does not bring the desired result 13.♙xh6?! gxh6 14.♙d3 c5! 15.♞xd5 ♞d8 16.♞e4 ♞xe4 17.♙xe4 ♙e6±; 13.0-0-0 ♗g4! 14.♙d3 h6=) 13...♙f5 14.♙xf5 (14.♞xh6 ♙xd3 15.♞h4 ♙e4±; 14.0-0-0 ♙xd3 15.♞xd3 f5∞) 14...♗xf5 15.♞g4 g6 (15...♗d6? 16.♞xh7! ♙xh7 17.♞h5+ ♙g8 18.♗g5+-; 15...♞f6 16.♞f4 ♞g6 17.g4 ♗d6 18.0-0-0±) 16.0-0-0 and while the computer defends the black position, I believe in White's attacking potential — especially in a game between two humans!

### 13.♞f4 f6?

Black should worry more about his king: 13...♗d6 14.♙d3 ♙e6 15.g4 0-0-0 16.g5±

## 14. ♖d3 g5



Now Black must go on an adventure with his pawns, because the h7 pawn hangs after ...♗d6.

## 15. ♕a4

There is no preferable place for the queen.

## 15...h6

A strange move but anyway this position is not good for Black. 15...♗d6 16.0-0-0 ♕f5 17.♕xf5 ♗xf5 18.g4 (18.e4 is an unnecessary complicating of the position 18...dxe4 19.♖he1 ♗d6 20.♖xd6 ♗xd6 21.♗xe4+ ♗f8 22.♗f5 ♖e8 23.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 24.♗c8+ ♗d8 25.♗xb7 ♖f8 26.♗xc6+ ♗f7 27.♗d4 ♗g8) 18...♗d6 19.♗d4±

## 16.0-0-0 b5

Maybe this was too much, but the idea was to remove the white queen far from the d4 square. 16...♗d6 17.♗d2 f5 18.♗d4!±

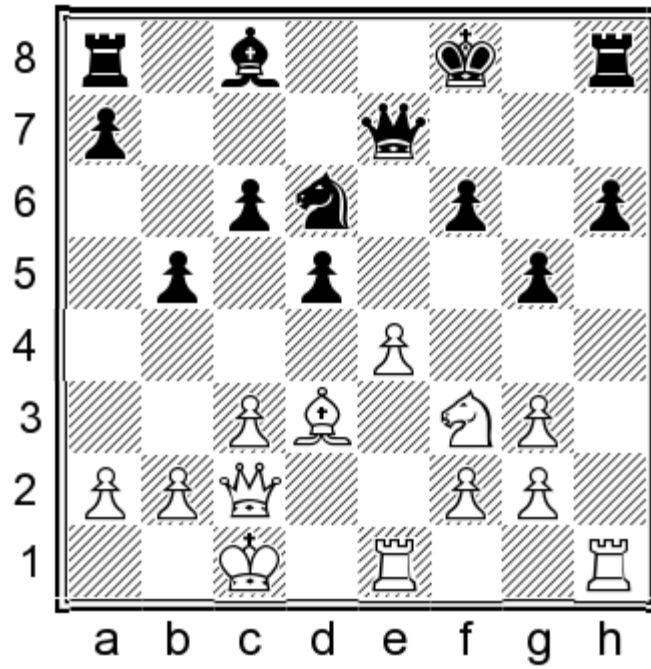
## 17. ♗c2 ♗d6 18. ♖de1 ♗f8

Black is trying to castle artificially. 18...♗e4 19.♗d4 ♕d7 20.g4! 0-0-0 21.f3 ♗d6 22.a4! a6 23.b4± combining play on both flanks.

18...f5 19.♗d4+–

## 19.e4!±

The correct moment to open the e-file and use the lack of co-ordination between the black rooks.



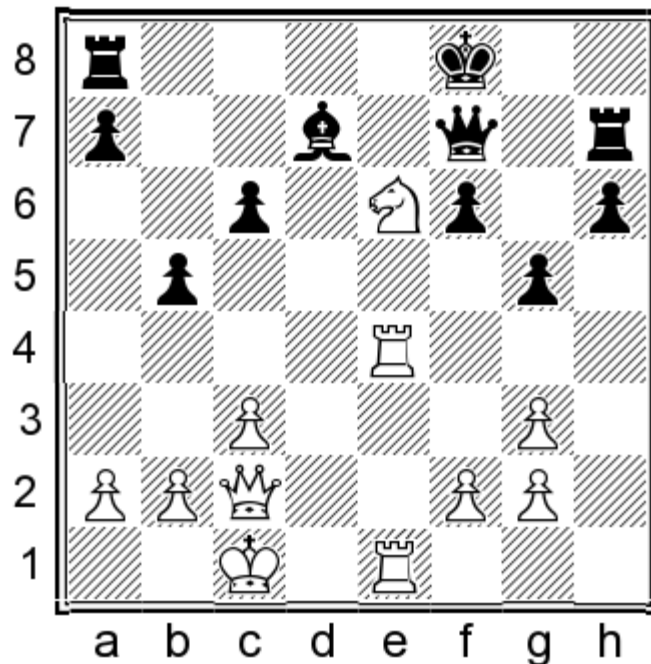
19...dxe4 20. Qxe4 Nxe4 21. Rxe4 Qf7

21...Qf5 lead to a lost endgame after 22. Rxe7 Qxc2 23. Rhe1 Qg6 24. Rc7+-

22. Nd4 Qd7 23. Rhe1 Rh7

Covering the square e7! Black would barely be able to move after 23...Re8 24. Rxe8+ Qxe8 25. Ne6+ Qg8 26. We4+-

24. Ne6+

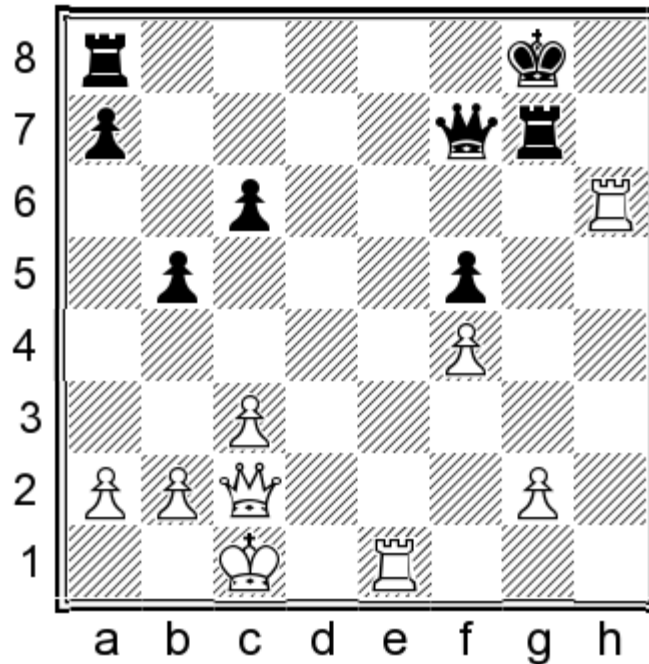


Also another, and more positional, plan was fine 24. Re3!? Qg8 25. Nf5 Qxf5 26. Wxf5+- with Re6 next.

24...♔g8 25.f4 gxf4

Black did not want to be fixed after f5 from White.

26.gxf4 f5 27.♖e5 ♗xe6 28.♖xe6 ♖g7 29.♖xh6



With this move I force a rook endgame.

29...♖xa2 30.♖xf5 ♖a1+ 31.♖b1 ♖xb1+ 32.♔xb1 ♖xg2 33.♖xc6+-

With a pawn advantage and my king closer to the pawns on the queenside, it is more than enough for the win!

33...♖d8

Also of no help was 33...♖f8 34.♖e7! a5 (34...♖xf4 35.♖xa7 ♖g5 36.♖c8+ ♖f8 37.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 38.♔a2+-) 35.♖b6 b4 36.cxb4 axb4 37.♖xb4+-

34.♖e7 a5 35.♖b7

One more pawn falls and the rest of the game was not very interesting.

35...b4 36.cxb4 a4

36...axb4 37.♖xb4 ♖f2 38.♖c5 ♖f8 39.♖g5+ ♔h7 40.♖b3 ♖f6 41.♖g4+-

37.♔a2 ♖f2 38.♖c4 a3 39.♔xa3 ♖a8+ 40.♔b3 ♖f3+ 41.♖c3 ♖xf4 42.b5 ♔f8 43.♖h3 ♔g8 44.♖c3 ♔f8 45.b6 ♔e8 46.♖h7

Conclusion: Our opening starts with 2.♗f4, so it's very logical that Black can always devise something new early in the opening with some unusual moves, but the pawn structure does not change! Here we see this with 5...♘h6!? The most important thing is to not be surprised by this kind of move: you simply have to continue playing in the spirit of the "London"!

**B. Grachev (2666) — A. Timofeev (2534)**

RUS-chT rapid Sochi (2.7), 08.05.2015

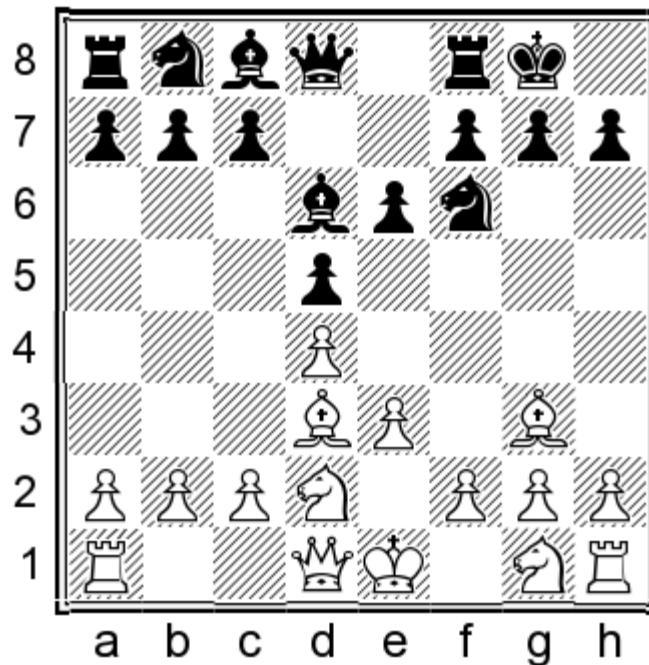
In this game between two strong Russian grandmasters the position with an early ...e6-...♘d6-...♞f6 with ...0-0-...c5 was played again, which remind us of some positions from CHAPTER 4 — the classical set-up with ...e6, the difference being that Black keeps a knight on b8 aiming to play ...b6-...♘a6!

With the precise move order, which Boris Grachev used, White can prevent that plan by pushing e4, transposing to a position typical of the French Defence, again with an unusual bishop on g3.

In the position reached in this game, Black didn't have the reply ...♞h5 after the move e4, which is a worse version for Black compared with the positions from CHAPTER 4.

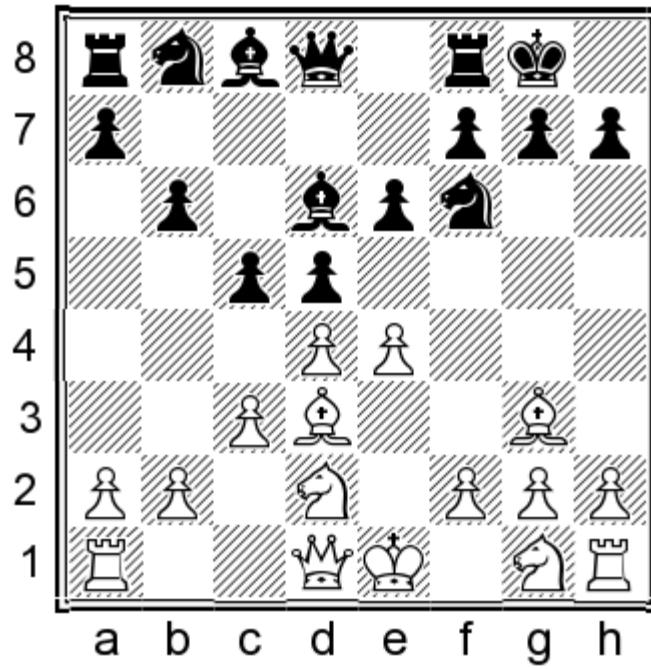
Using a typical method against the French Defence — playing on the dark squares (especially e5) and against the pawn islands — White won the game in fine positional style!

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 e6 3.e3 ♞f6 4.♞d2 ♘d6 5.♘g3 0-0! 6.♘d3!**



The move order is very important here! After the imprecise 6.♞gf3 Black can equalize easily with 6...c5 7.c3 b6 8.♘d3 ♘a6= and without his white-squared bishop, White has hopes of an attack.

**6...c5 7.c3 b6 8.e4!**



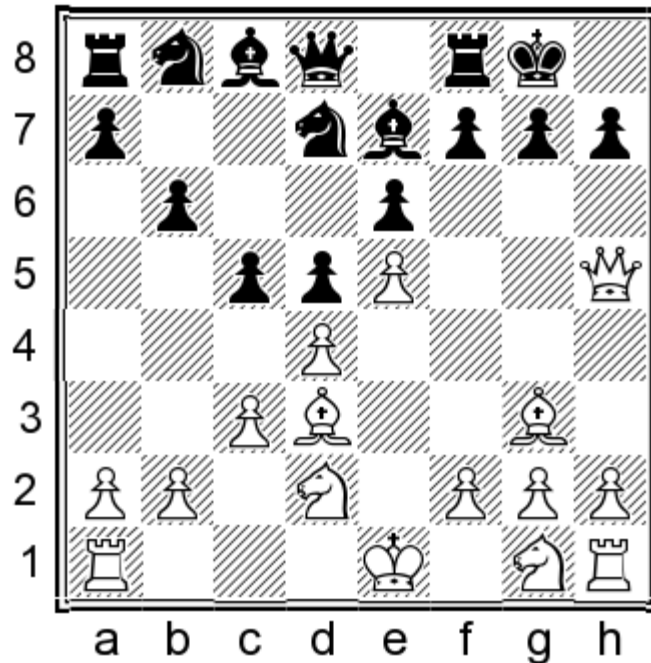
This position is very similar to the position from chapter four. The difference is in the knights on g1 and b8 instead of on f3 and c6. Compare this position with the game Grischuk A.-Nakamura H. EU cup 2015.

8...♔e7 9.e5 ♖fd7

The knight must go to d7 instead of h5. The difference is big!

10.♕h5!

Many times we have talked about this typical method of weakening Black's king position.



10...f5

After 10...g6 White has achieved a great French-type position, e.g. 11.♖e2 ♘c6 12.♗gf3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘b4 14.0-0 a5 15.♞fc1 ♘xd3 16.♞xd3 ♙a6 17.♞e3 ♞e8 18.h4 h5 19.♙f4 ♞c8 20.♙g5 ♙xg5 21.♗xg5± Grachev,B (2673)-Malakhov,V (2696) Moscow 2014;

With 10...h6 Black weakens the g6 square, after which ideas with ...f6 or ...f5 will never work! 11.♗e2 ♙a6 12.♙xa6 ♗xa6 13.0-0!±

**11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♞e2 cxd4 13.cxd4±**

This structure is typical of the French Tarrasch position in the 3.♗d2 ♗f6 line. Here White has full control of the e5 square!

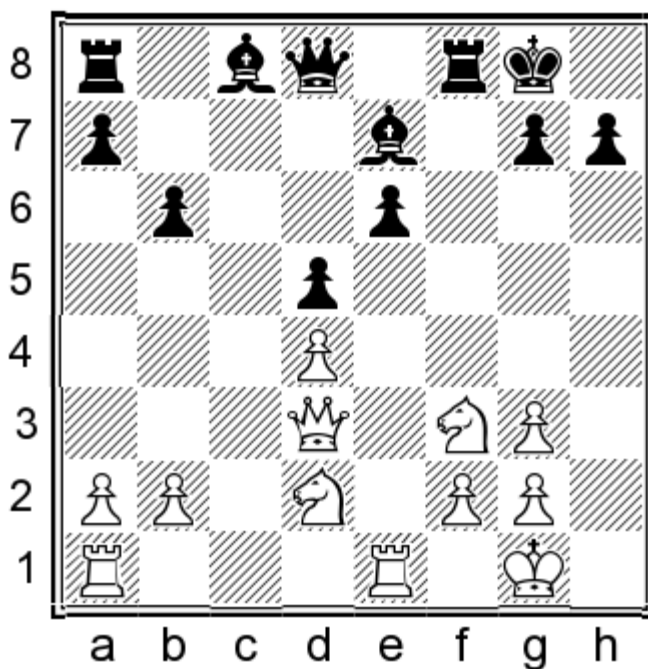
**13...♗c6 14.♗gf3 ♗b4 15.0-0**

White doesn't care about the bishop pair, he is interested mostly in the e5 square. Almost all kinds of exchanges are good for White!

**15...♗xd3 16.♞xd3 ♗h5**

Black decides to take the other bishop also!

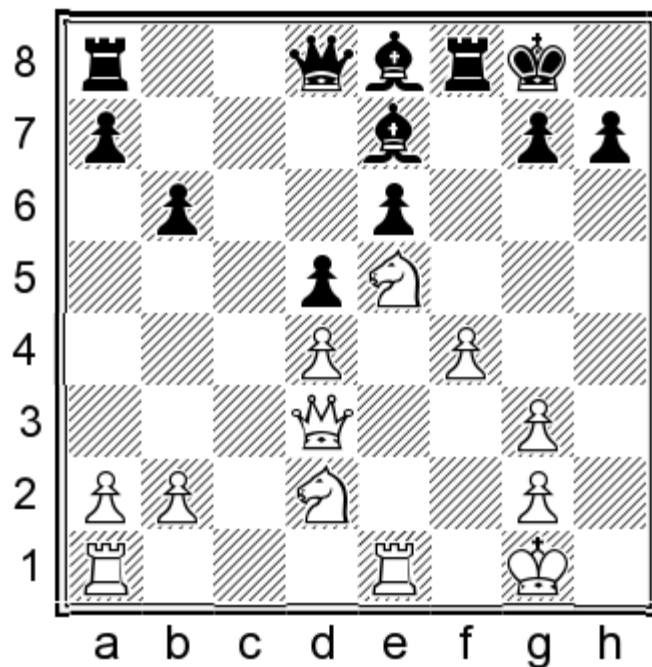
**17.♞fe1 ♗xg3 18.hxg3**



In my repertoire with Black I have the French Defense and I am always trying to avoid this kind of position with pawn islands, especially without knights to control the weak points. And to make serious counterplay is very difficult for Black.

**18...♙d7 19.♗e5 ♙e8 20.f4!**

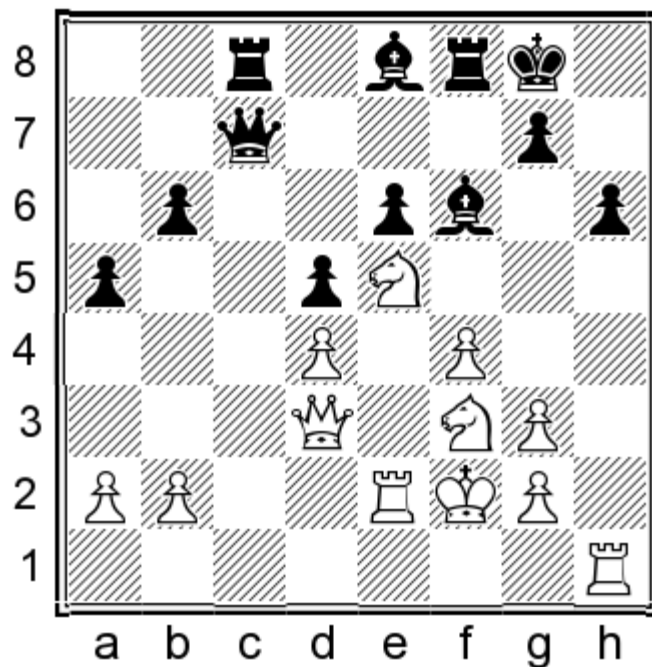
Sometimes this can be weakening, but here White has a clear plan to use the h file!



20...Kc8 21.♘df3 ♚c7 22.Ke2!

A prophylactic move with the idea of avoiding the endgame after Black's ...♚c2!

22...a5 23.♔f2! ♙f6 24.♞h1 h6?!±



After this logical-looking move Black finds himself in serious trouble. With the active 24...g5 he could stay in the game. 25.♚e3 gxf4 26.gxf4 ♙xe5 27.dxe5 ♙g6 28.♘d4 ♚f7 29.♞h4± White is strategically better but the white-squared bishop has come to life again.

25.♘g4 ♚c4?!

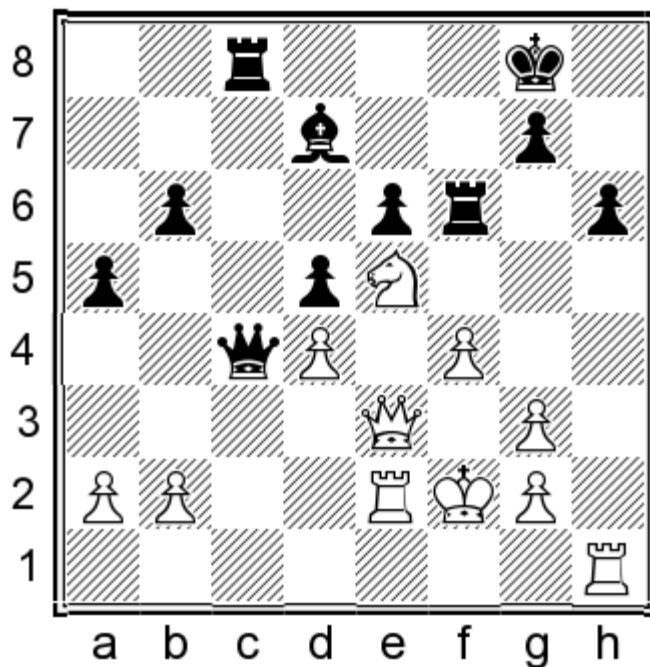
Losing a pawn. It was very hard to play 25...h5 and create another weakness, but it preserves the pawn 26. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6±

26. ♜e3 ♜d7

26... ♜c6 27. ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 28. ♜xe6 ♜d7 29. ♖xf6+±

27. ♗ge5

White decides to take a pawn, entering into the endgame. Very painful for Black would be 27. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 28. ♗e5±

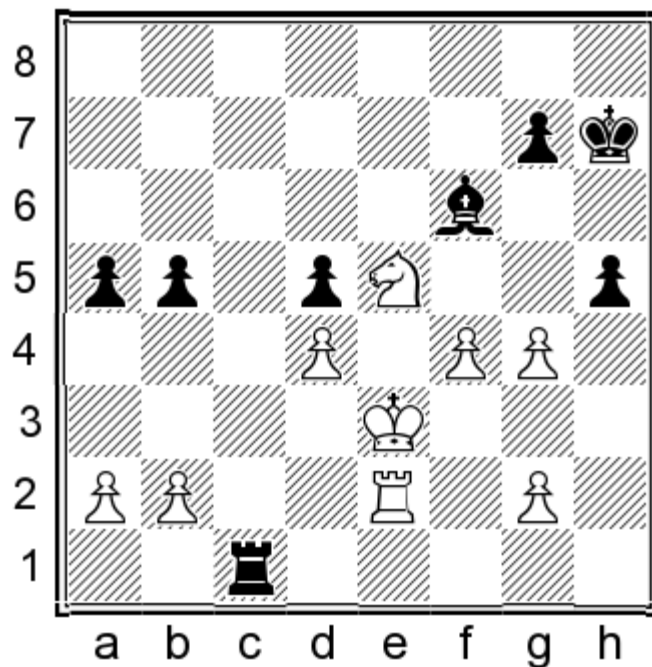


with a White dream in the French Defense.

27... ♜b5 28. ♖xd7 ♜xd7 29. ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 30. ♜xe6+- ♜c2+ 31. ♜e2 ♜fc8 32. ♜he1 h5

Black's position looks active but it is without serious compensation for the pawn. The strong grandmaster Boris Grachev is impeccable in such technical positions.

33. ♜xc2 ♜xc2+ 34. ♜e2 ♜c1 35. ♔e3 ♔h7 36. ♗e5 b5 37. g4!



White is released from the doubled pawns.

**37...hxg4**

37...♙xe5 leads to a lost pawn endgame after 38.dxe5 hxg4 39.e6 ♔g8 40.e7 ♖c8 41.♙d4 ♙f7 42.e8=♚+ ♖xe8 43.♖xe8 ♙xe8 44.♙xd5+-

**38.♗xg4 ♙d8 39.♗e5 ♙b6**

Black activates his bishop, but it is not enough for a draw!

**40.g4 ♖d1 41.♗f3 ♖c1 42.f5 g6 43.f6 g5 44.♖h2+!**

White uses a tactic to finish the game!

**44...♙g8**

44...♙g6 45.♗e5+ ♙xf6 46.♖h6+ ♙g7 47.♖xb6+-

**45.♗xg5 ♖e1+ 46.♙f2 ♖c1 47.f7+**

Conclusion: Always pay attention to Black's move-orders also, as well as his ideas! In this game with 6.♙d3! and 8.e4! White prevented Black's plan of ...b6-...♙a6, transposing instead to a nice version of a French set-up for White. This is actually a refutation of this dubious idea and move order from Black. The "London" is a system you have to learn and play by understanding the ideas — there is no room here for theory nerds!

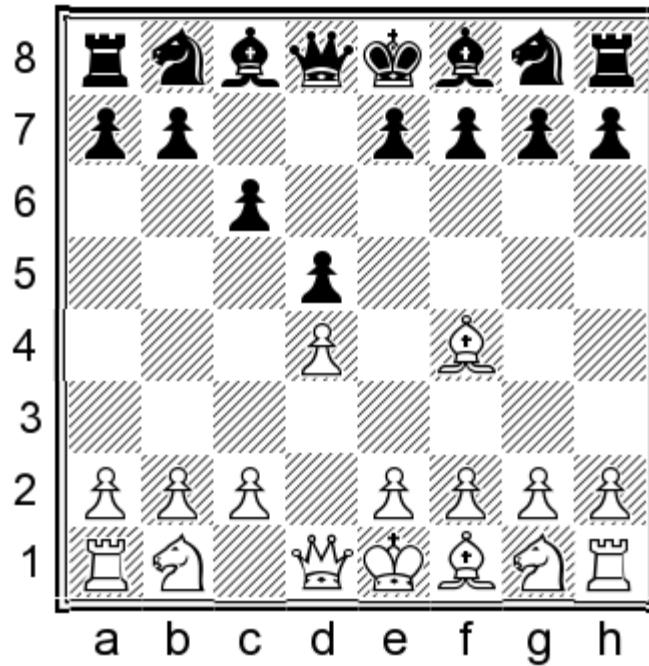
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# CHAPTER SIX

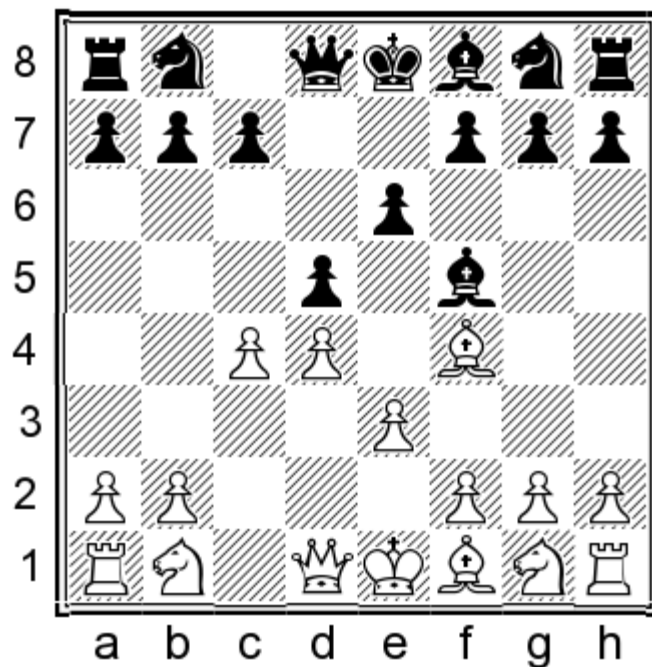
## SLAV SET-UP — 2...c6 AND SYMMETRY 2...♘f5

In this chapter we will discuss the set-up from Slav Defense! The structures are not the same as in previous chapters, because White plays c4 instead of c3. This set-up allows White to create quick play on the queenside by attacking the b7 pawn, after which Black usually reacts with ...♝b6 entering passive endgames! The symmetrical 2...♘f5 with 3...e6 is a better option for Black, one which gives him the possibility to finish his development faster.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c6



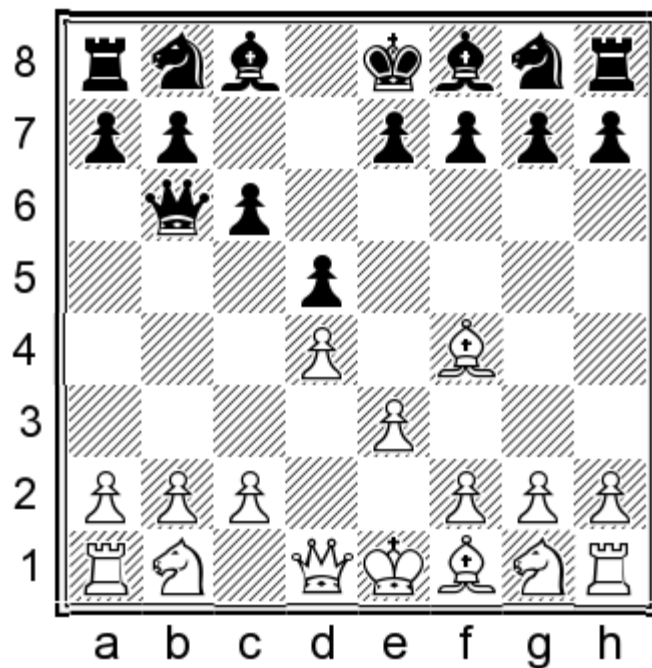
After the symmetrical 2...♘f5 3.e3 e6 4.c4!



An important move! White doesn't have to be afraid of moves like 4...♙xb1!? (4...c6 -is a transposition to 2...c6)  
 5.♙xb1 ♙b4+ 6.♚d1 -see Georgiev K — Godena M. Padova open 2014.

3.e3 ♙f5

3...♙b6

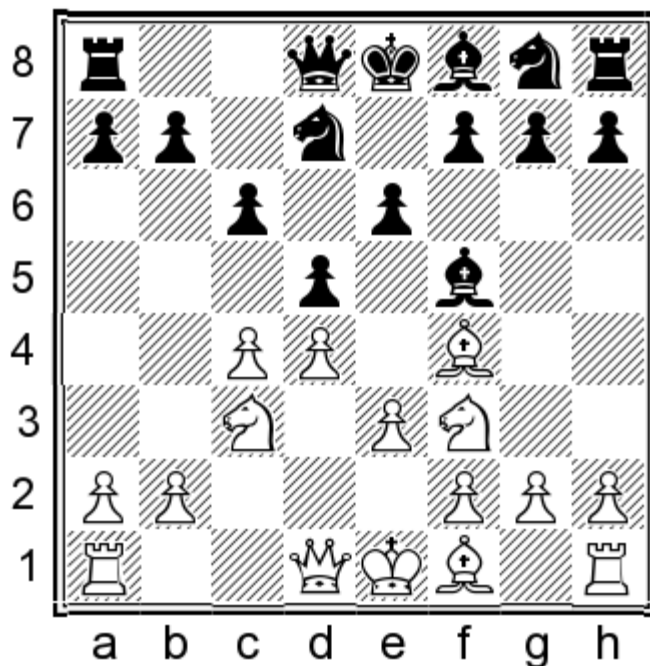


This line reminds me of a position from the Queens Pawn Game 1.d4 d5 2.♙g5 h6 3.♙h4 c6 4.e3 ♙b6, but in our position the bishop on f4 is better-placed than on g5. From f4 it better controls the e5 square and Black can only dream of implementing the freeing move ...e5! 4.b3 -see Winants L — Georgiev V. Turin ol 2006.

4.c4 e6

A 'violent' approach does not bring the desired result 4...♙xb1 5.♖xb1 e5? -see Berkes F. -Lupulescu C. Dresden of 2008.

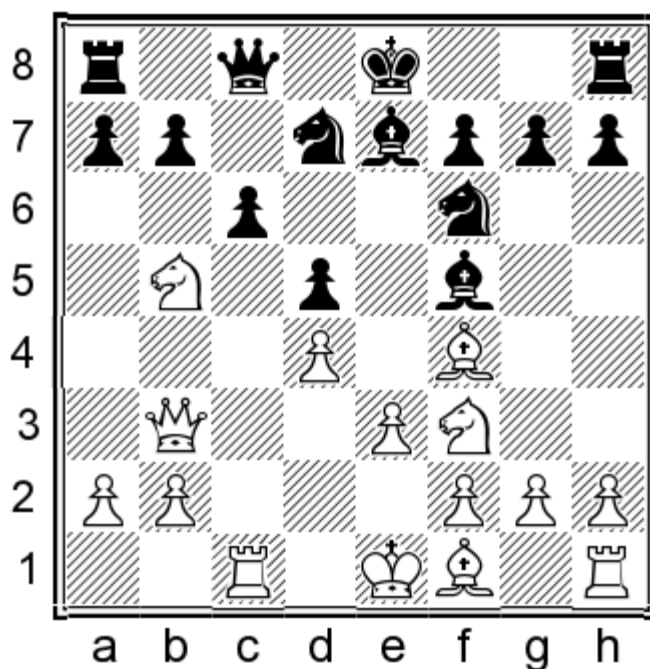
5.♗c3 ♗d7 6.♗f3!



Before the move ♗b3 it is very important to insert this move! 6.♗b3 is not a precise move-order 6...♗b6 7.c5 ♗xb3 8.axb3 e5!⇒

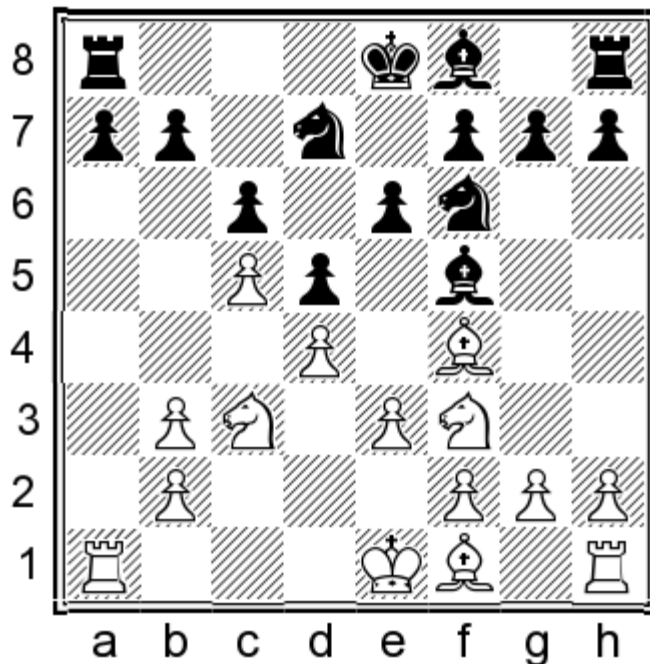
6...♗gf6 7.♗b3 ♗b6

In case of the passive 7...♗c8, White's reaction is 8.cxd5! exd5 (8... ♗xd5 9.♙g3 ♙e7 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0±) 9.♖c1 ♙e7 (9...a6 10.♗e5 ♗xe5 11.♙xe5 ♗d7 12.♙g3 ♗f6 13.♙h4 ♗d7 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♗a4 ♖d8 16.♙d3±) 10.♗b5!



10...0-0 11.♔d6! ♖d8 12.♗a3! ♙xd6 13.♘xd6 ♙e4 14.♘xb7 ♗b6 15.♘c5 ♘xc5 16.♝xc5 ♞fb8 17.b3 ♙xf3 18.gxf3 a5  
 19.♙d3 a4 20.bxa4 ♘d7 21.♞c1 ♗a5+ 22.♗c3 ♗xa4 23.♗xc6 ♗xc6 24.♝xc6 ♞xa2 25.0-0±

8.c5 ♗xb3 9.axb3±



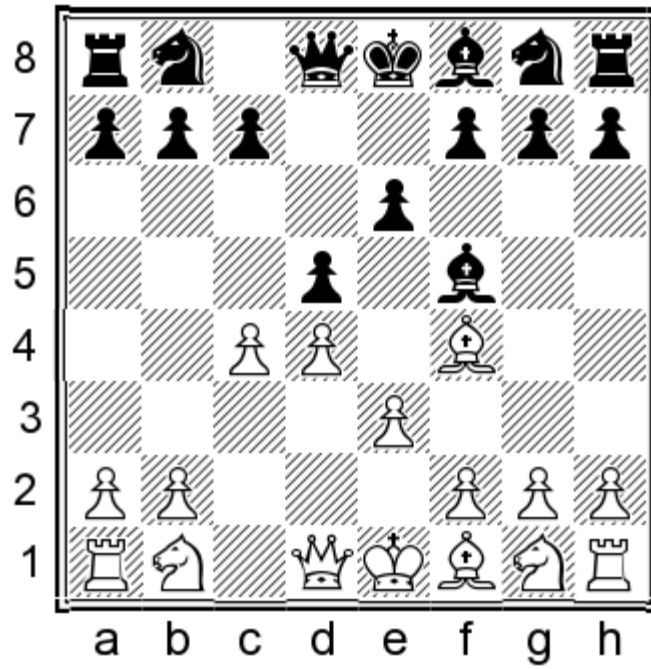
Maybe this evaluation looks ill-advised, but praxis shows that Black does not have sufficient counterplay-see games Kharlov A.-Dokutchayev A. Kazan 1995. Prie E. -Varga P. FRA ch team 2009.

**K. Georgiev (2628) — M. Godena (2495)**

Padova op 17th Padova (4), 16.12.2014

In the first game of CHAPTER 6 we will see what happens when Black tries to play symmetrically with 2...♙f5!? 3.e3 e6. The famous GM from Bulgaria reacted forcibly with 4.c4! without fear leaving his king in the center, after which he outplayed his opponent, for many years the 1st board of the Italian team!

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 ♙f5 3.e3 e6 4.c4!

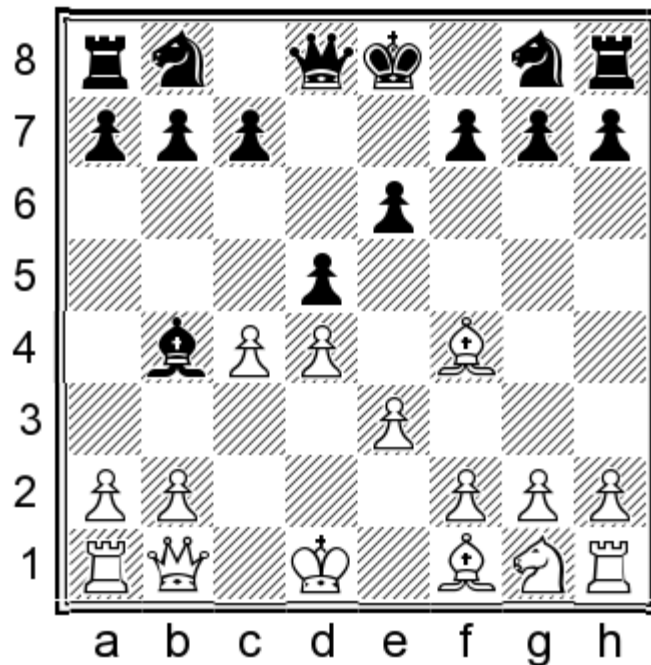


I prefer this move, although Black has the possibility to spoil White castling. With 4.c4 the idea is to play a quick ♖b3.

**4...♙xb1!? 5.♖xb1**

Another typical reaction is 5.♗a4+ but it seems to be a better version for Black compared to the game. 5...♘c6 (5...b5? 6.♗xb5+ ♘d7 (6...c6 7.♗b7!+-) 7.♖xb1 ♖b8 8.♗c6±) 6.♖xb1 ♙b4+ 7.♔d1 dxc4 8.♙xc4 a6 9.a3 ♙d6=

**5...♙b4+ 6.♔d1**



Black didn't hurt White's king, he is just trying to speed up his development. The white monarch is safe on d1.

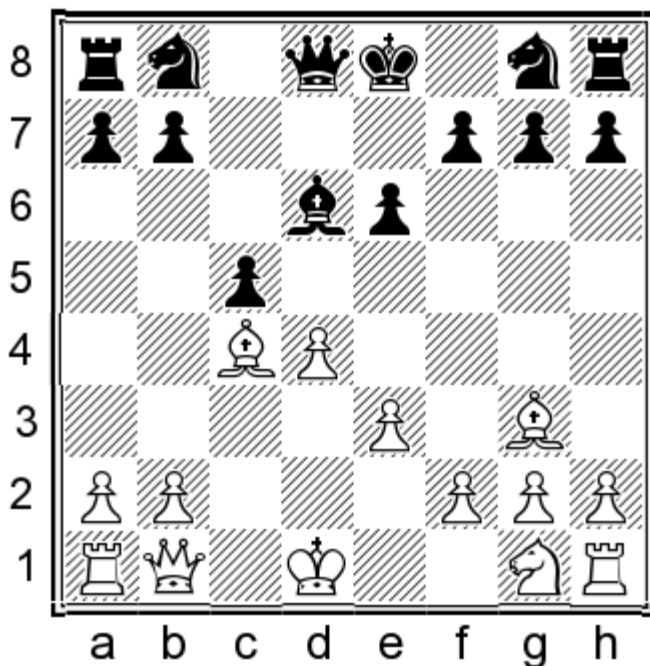
**6...dxc4**

Black has to do something against the c5 threat. To me it looks better to play 6...♙d6 7.♙xd6 (or 7.♙g3 ♗f6 8.♗f3 0-0 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♙d3∞) 7...♚xd6 8.♗f3 ♗f6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♙d3 0-0 11.♗e2 ♗bd7 12.♞c1 c6 13.b4 with a standard Carlsbad position.

**7.♙xc4 ♙d6 8.♙g3**

Of course. Why go into a symmetrical position? 8.♙xd6 cxd6 9.♗f3 ♗f6 10.♗e2 0-0 11.♞c1 ♗c6=

**8...c5!?**



Black also doesn't care about castling and he tries instead to create pressure in the center. 8...♗f6 9.♗e2 0-0 10.♗f3 ♗bd7 11.♞c2±

**9.♙b5+ ♗f8 10.♗f3 ♙xg3 11.hxg3 ♗f6**

Black missed an interesting continuation after which the position would be balanced: 11...cxd4 12.♞d3 a6 13.♗xd4!± with the idea ♗d6;

11...a6! 12.♙a4 cxd4 13.♞d3 b5 14.♙b3 ♗c6 15.exd4 (15.♞c1? dxe3±) 15...♗f6 16.♞c1 ♞d6 17.♗e2 in this non-standard position with isolated pawns, I prefer White thanks to his slightly better development and the c5 square.

**12.♞c2 cxd4 13.♗xd4**

Also advantageous is 13.♞c5+ ♗g8 14.♞xd4±

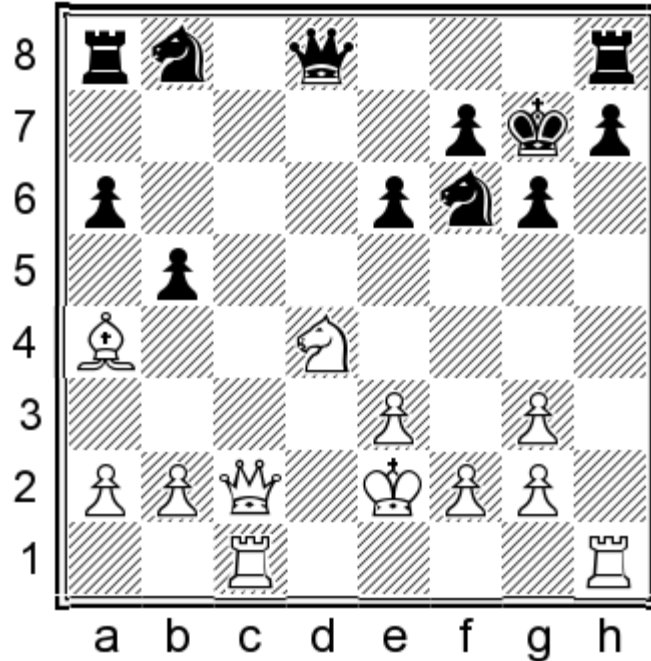
**13...g6**

Black solves the problem of his king! 13...e5? 14.♞c5+±

**14.♗e2 ♗g7 15.♞ac1±**

White is first to take a file!

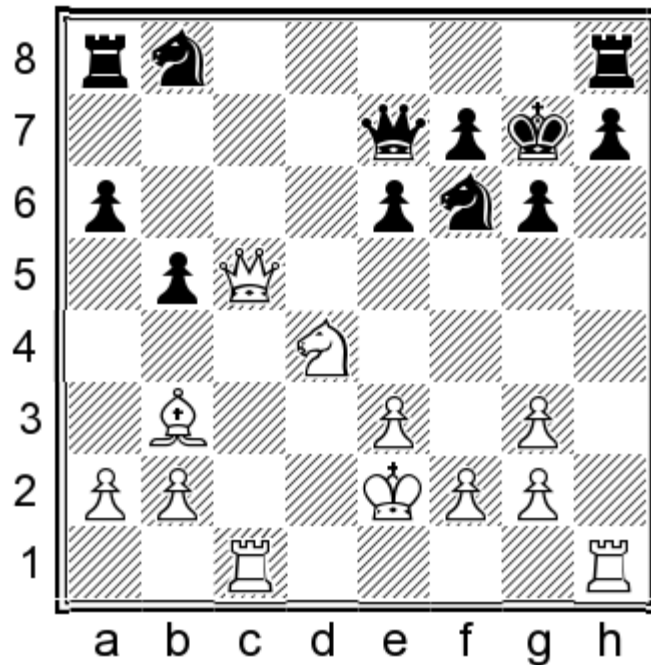
15...a6 16.♔a4 b5?



After this weakening, Black position begins to be difficult. The only route leading to a playable position for Black was 16...♟bd7 17.♞c7 ♞c8! 18.♞xb7 ♞b8 19.♞xa6 ♞xb2+ 20.♞c2 ♞xc2+ 21.♟xc2 ♞c7 22.♞c1 ♞c8 23.♟f1±

17.♟b3 ♞e7 18.♞c5?!±

Very logical. White bases his play on the queenside.



But with this computer move, White could finish his game much faster: 18.g4! e5 (18...h6 19.g5! hxg5 20.♞xh8 ♟xh8 21.♞c8+ ♟g7 22.♞c7+-) 19.♟f5+! gxf5 20.♞xf5 ♟bd7 21.♞g5+ ♟f8 22.♞h6+ ♟g8 (22...♟e8 23.g5 ♟g4 24.♞h5 ♟xf2 25.♟xf2+-) 23.g5 ♟g4 24.♞h5 ♟xf2 25.♟xf2+-

18...♖a7 19.♔xe7

Kiril wasn't dreaming of mate. He has a clear plan to use the open file and better-placed pieces in the endgame.

19...♖xe7 20.♖hd1

Now White controls both open files and the position is playing on one goal.

20...♖he8 21.♖c2 ♖b7 22.♖dc1

The plan changes! From the d-file White couldn't derive any benefit!

22...♔f8 23.a3 ♘bd7 24.♘c6

The knight heads closer to the exposed black pawns on the queenside!

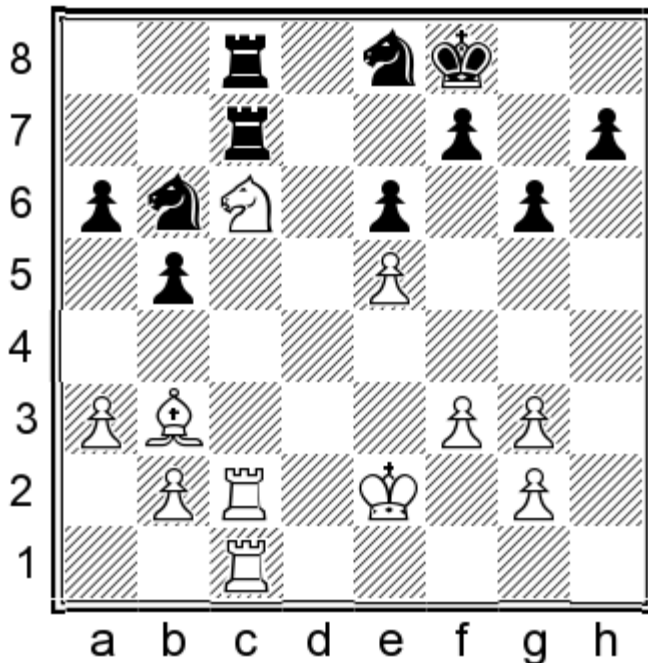
24...♖c8 25.f3

White starts to limit Black's knights.

25...♖bc7 26.e4 ♘e8 27.e5

Taking space and playing against the knight on e8!

27...♘b6?



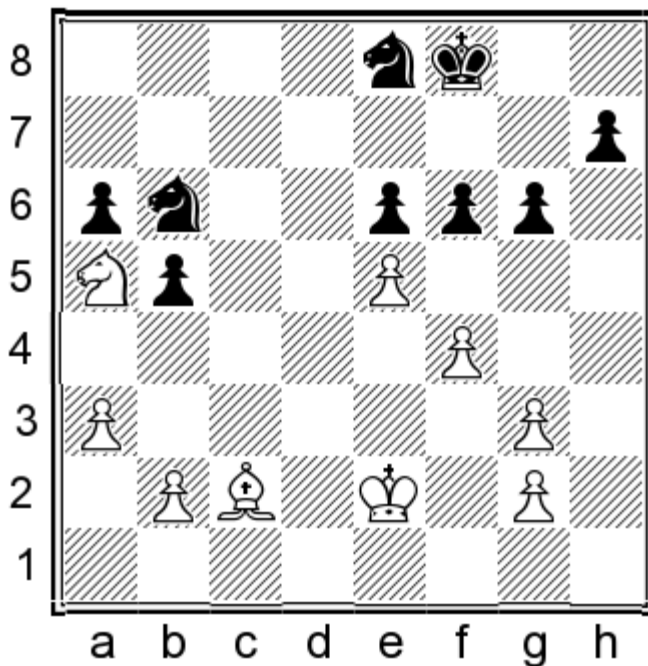
Black's knight stood well on d7 and pressured e5. In this kind of structure it is always good to fix the g3 pawn with 27...h5! creating a potential square on f5 for the knight.

28.♘a5

In my opinion it was perhaps a little bit early to go in for simplification. Black doesn't have an active plan and White could improve his position some more. Generally speaking Kiril is one of the best in this type of position, so he knows

why he chose this way. A useful move was 28.g4 but maybe Kiril was afraid of 28...♖c4 29.♗xc4 ♜xc6 30.♗d3 ♜xc2+ 31.♜xc2 ♜xc2+ 32.♗xc2± but here White has a typical endgame where his bishop dominates the knight. 32...♖e7 33.♖e3 ♖d7 34.♖d4 ♖c6 35.b4 ♖b6 36.f4 ♗g7 37.♗d1 ♖c6 38.♗e2 ♖b6 39.♗f3⊙ 39...h6 (39...♗e8 40.f5 ♗c7 41.f6 ♗e8 42.♖e3 ♗c7 43.♖f4 h6 44.♗e4 g5+ 45.♖e3+- with ♗g6 next) 40.♗d1 ♖c6 41.♗e2 ♖b6 42.♗f3⊙ 42...♗e8 43.f5 g5 44.f6 ♗c7 45.♗e4 ♗e8 46.♗g6+-

**28...♜xc2+ 29.♜xc2 ♜xc2+ 30.♗xc2 f6 31.f4!±**



White still doesn't give up squares to the knights.

**31...fxe5 32.fxe5 ♖e7 33.♗c6+!**

An important move removing Black's king from the center!

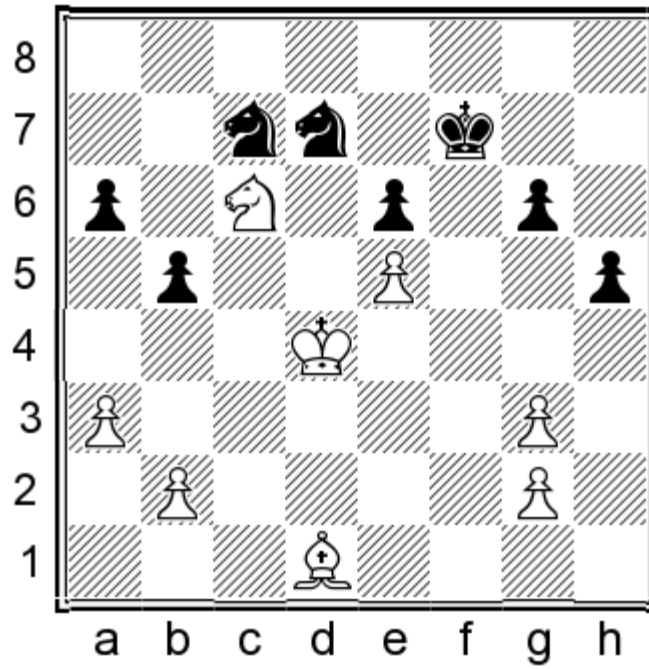
**33...♖f7 34.♗b3**

White pressures the e6 pawn and at the same time prevents ...♗c4.

**34...♗c7 35.♖d3**

Slowly the king enters the queenside!

**35...h5 36.♖d4 ♗d7 37.♗d1!**



Now White finds a plan to drive the black knight from d7 and penetrate with his king on c5. For that, it's necessary to transfer the bishop to the diagonal h1–a8!

**37...♖d5 38.♙f3 ♜c7 39.b3 ♔g7 40.♗a5!**

A route for the white king is secured after the coming ♙c6!

**40...♔h6 41.♙c6+–**

He found a way and the rest of the game is a technical realisation of the position.

**41...♗f8 42.♔c5 ♔g5**

Black is very late with his counterplay!

**43.♔b6 ♗d5+ 44.♔xa6 ♔g4 45.♔xb5 ♔xg3**

In pawn races, the advantage is almost always with the side who has the bishop.

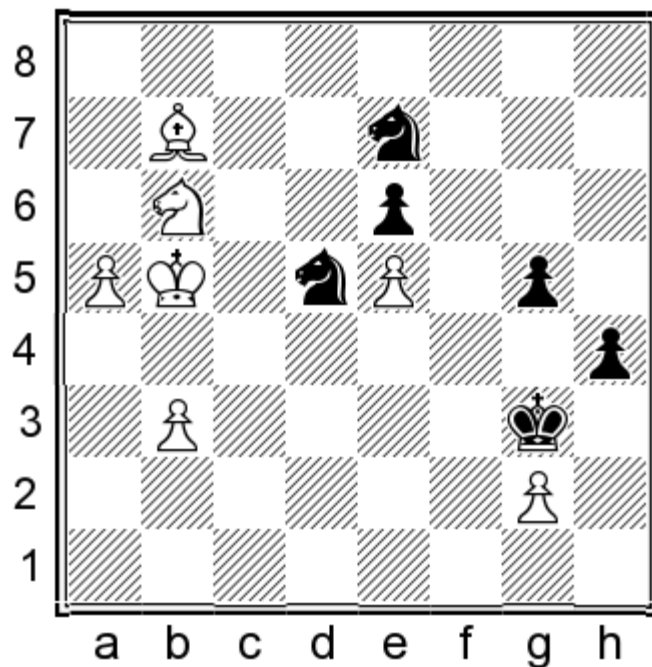
**46.♗c4 g5**

Unfortunately for Black, it was not possible to play 46...♔xg2 47.♗e3+! ♔f2 48.♗xd5 exd5 49.♙xd5 g5 50.a4+– and White is much quicker.

**47.a4 ♗g6**

Tasked with being sacrificed for the fast pawn!

**48.a5 ♗ge7 49.♙b7 h4 50.♗b6**



I guess in time-trouble, Whites panics a little bit. Much better was 50.♔c5 ♕xg2 (50...g4 51.a6 h3 52.gxh3 gxh3 53.♗e3! ♗xe3 (53...h2 54.♗f1+ ♖h3 55.♗xh2 ♖xh2 56.a7+-) 54.a7 ♗7d5 55.a8=♚ h2 56.♚g8+ ♖f2 57.♚h7 ♖g1 58.♚g6+ ♖f2 59.♚h6 ♖g1 60.♗xd5 ♗xd5 61.♚g5+ ♖f2 62.♚h4+ ♖g2 63.♚g4+ ♖f2 64.♚h3 ♖g1 65.♚g3+ ♖h1 66.♚f2+-) 51.a6 h3 52.a7 h2 53.♗e3+ ♖g1 54.a8=♚ h1=♚ 55.♚a1+ ♖h2 56.♚xh1+ ♖xh1 57.♗d6+-

**50...♗c7+**

50...g4!? 51.♗xd5 exd5 52.a6 h3 53.gxh3 gxh3 54.a7 h2 55.a8=♚ h1=♚ 56.♚f8 ♚h7 57.♖b6+- and White still has to be careful.

**51.♖c5 ♗f5 52.b4 g4 53.♗c4**

White didn't have any reason for this move, but it's also enough good! White promotes to a queen first and, two pawns up, is easily winning. The rest of the game will be without comments. 53.b5 h3 54.gxh3 gxh3 55.a6 h2 56.♗h1+-

**53...♗d5 54.a6 h3 55.gxh3 gxh3 56.♗xd5 exd5 57.a7 h2 58.a8=♚ h1=♚ 59.♚xd5 ♚g1+ 60.♖b5 ♗d4+ 61.♖a6 ♚a1+ 62.♖b6 ♚c3 63.b5 ♖f4 64.♗d6 ♚e3 65.♚f7+ ♗f5+ 66.♖b7 ♖xe5 67.♗c4+ ♖d4 68.♗xe3 ♗d6+ 69.♖c7 ♗xf7 70.b6**

A very nice technical game by Kiril Georgiev!

**1-0**

### Lessons to be learned:

1. Only with the c4 plan, using the absence of the bishop from c8, can White fight for an advantage.
2. Don't be afraid to play with your king in the center — your king is safe! Black is not better-developed and he gave up the bishop pair. The endgame is better thanks to the king in the center!

**L. Winants (2530) — V. Georgiev (2535)**

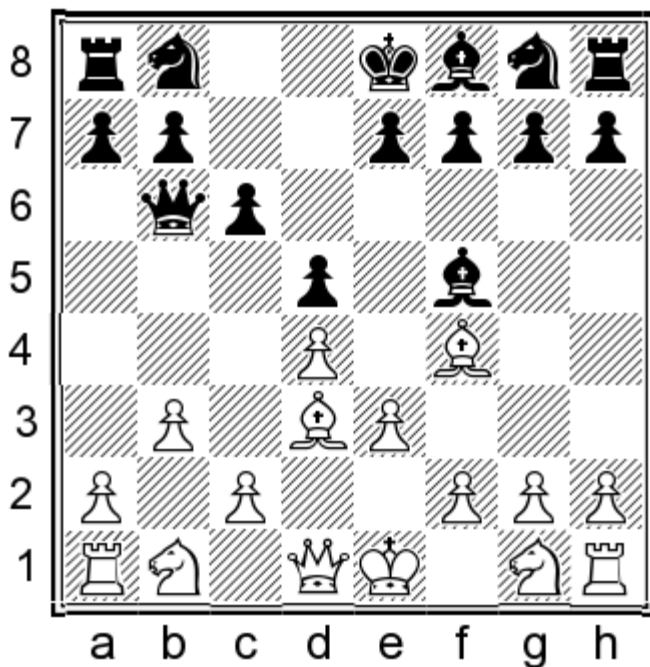
Turin ol (Men) 37th Turin (3), 23.05.2006

Compared to the previous game, here Black chooses the line 2...c6 with 3...♖b6, with the idea to create pressure on the b2 pawn. White responded with the simplest plan — 4.b3 followed by 5.♗d3 — the idea being to continue with taking space on the queenside. Faced with that plan, Black put the queen on a6, after which White changed his plan, moving the play to the center and the kingside exploiting the misplaced black queen on a6. In the end White finished the game with an effective attack.

**1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c6 3.e3 ♖b6 4.b3**

In my opinion this is the best plan. It is also possible to play 4.♖c1 but White loses the possibility to exchange bishops after ♗d3 as happens in this game.

**4...♗f5 5.♗d3**



This is the simplest plan. The bishop on f5 is strong and he can disturb White's action on the queenside after c4-c5-b4-b5. The b1-square will not be available for the rook after opening the b-file. A famous 'London' expert has also tried 5.a3 ♗f6 6.c4 e6 7.♗c3 ♗bd7 8.c5 ♖d8 9.b4 a6 10.h3 ♗e4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗e2 ♗e7 13.♗c3 ♗g6 14.♗e2 0-0 15.0-0± Kovacevic,V (2520) -Vukelic,T (2310) Porec 1998 and White has a free hand on the queenside!

**5...♗xd3**

5...♗g6 doesn't make a huge difference. White can continue with 6.♗e2 e6 7.0-0 ♗f6 8.c4 ♗e7 9.♗bc3± and the standard plan on the queenside of c5-b4-b5.

**6.♖xd3 ♗f6 7.♗f3 ♗bd7 8.0-0 e6 9.c4 ♖a6**

A typical move against the c5 plan! The downside of this move is that the Black queen can stand misplaced at some point.

**10.♗bd2 ♗h5?!**

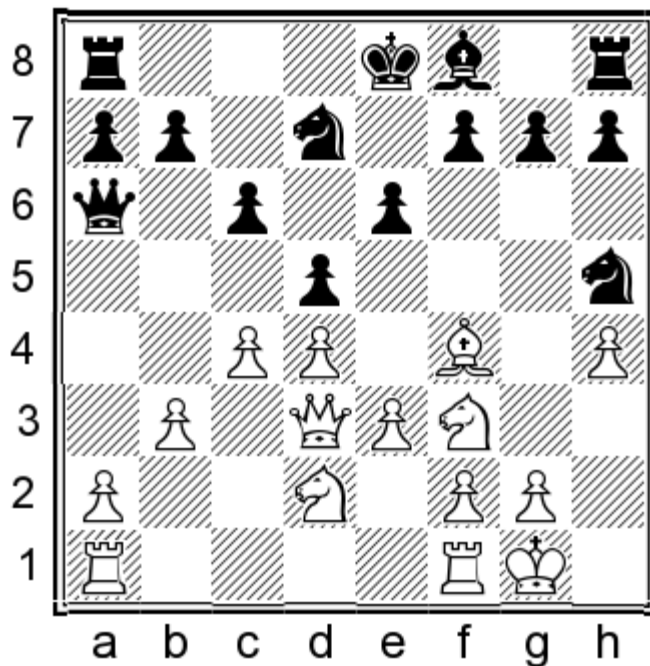
The wrong plan. The "London bishop" is always unpleasant, controlling the important diagonal h2-b8, so this move is understandable. But in this position ...♗f4 isn't a real threat. Black should play more peaceably with 10. ♗e7 11.e4

dxe4 12. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 13. ♝xe4± and White has a small advantage due to having more space. In this typical position from many opening lines, the queen on a6 is placed awkwardly and Black doesn't have his usual plan of a5-a4.

Also natural was 10... ♖d8 11. ♝c2 moving out of the pin 11... ♗e7 12. c5 ♗h5 13. b4 ♗xf4 14. exf4 b6 15. cxb6 (15. f5!? exf5 16. ♖fe1 →) 15... ♝xb6 16. a3 0-0 17. ♗b3 ♗d6 18. g3± Schlindwein, R (2425)-Tregubov, P (2515) Cappelle-la-Grande 1995

### 11. h4!?

An original move which makes a lot of sense. White makes space for the bishop retreat on h2 and at the same time the pawn h4 can help in future actions against the black king, supporting ideas with ♗g5! Also 11. ♗e5 causes problems for Black 11... f6 12. ♗g3 ♗xg3 13. hxg3± and now the pawn on e6 may become a problem after White's main plan e3-e4.



### 11... ♗e7

With this move Black realizes that he chose the wrong plan with ... ♗h5. 11... ♗xf4 12. exf4 g6 13. ♖fe1 ♗e7 14. ♗g5± and the problem of the black king is evident.

### 12. ♗h2

The bishop is saved!

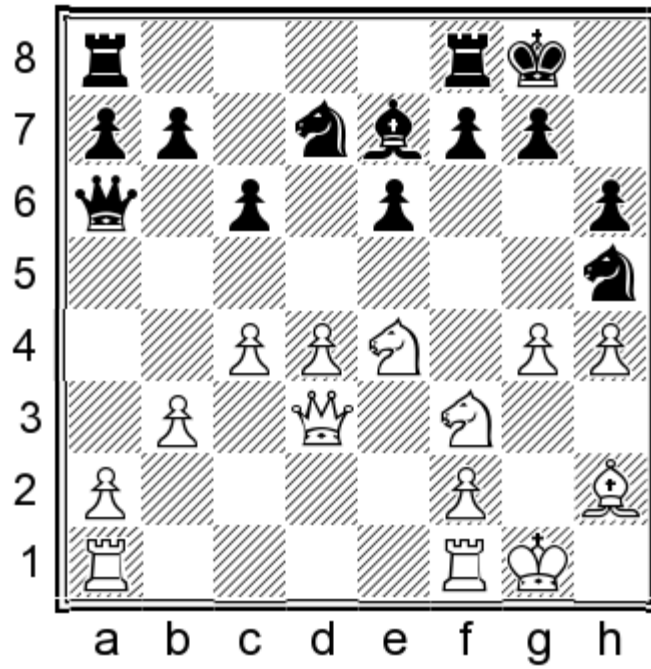
### 12... h6?

This move turns out to be an unnecessary weakening. After 12... ♗hf6 13. e4 dxe4 14. ♗xe4 0-0± Black would still have a playable position.

### 13. e4 dxe4 14. ♗xe4 0-0

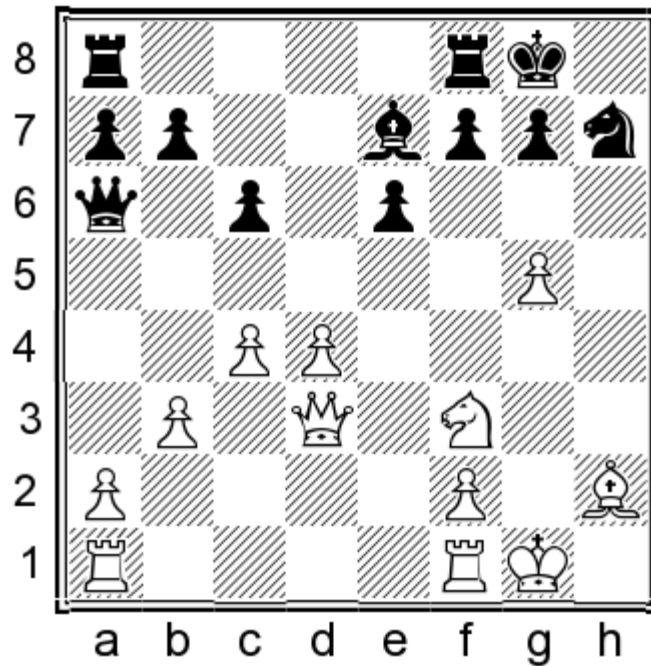
A very risky decision, but what else could Black do against the ♗d6 threat?

### 15. g4!±



The pawn on h6 becomes a target, while the queen on a6 is far from events.

15... ♖hf6 16. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 17.g5 hxg5 18.hxg5 ♖h7



Of no help is 18... ♖h5 19. ♖g2 ♗a5 20. ♖ae1! an important move! It prevents ... ♗f5 and threatens g6. 20...g6 21. ♖xe6! fxe6 22. ♗xg6+ ♖g7 23. ♗e5 ♖f7 24. ♖h1 ♗b4 25. ♗h7+ ♖f8 26.g6+-

19. ♗f4 ♖fd8 20. ♖g2

White freewheels to the finish, attacking along the h file.

20... ♖f8 21. ♖e5

...♘g6 shouldn't be allowed..

21...♙c5 22.♖h1 ♙xd4 23.♗h3 ♘g6 24.♘xg6

with mate after ♗e6!

Conclusion: The set-up with ...c6, ...♗b6 used by Vladimir Georgiev doesn't make much sense to me, especially when compared to the position from the Trompowsky (Queen Pawn) game. For example: 1.d4 d5 2.♙g5 h6 3.♙h4 c6 4.e3 ♗b6 5.b3 e5!? or after 5.♗c1 e5!? and after 6.dxe5? ♗b4 with ♗h4 coming! Another good plan for Black after 5.b3 or 5.♗c1 is 5...♙f5, with ...e6, ...♙e7 next and Black develops the bishop with tempo, offering exchanges! In our position we don't have this kind of problem and therefore this is a much-improved version. The bishop on f4 is much better placed, because the ...e5 move for Black is impossible! Against this set-up, White has to take space on the queenside by pushing the pawns b3-c4 and c5-b4 if Black allows it. It seems like ...♗b6 stimulates White's action on the queenside!

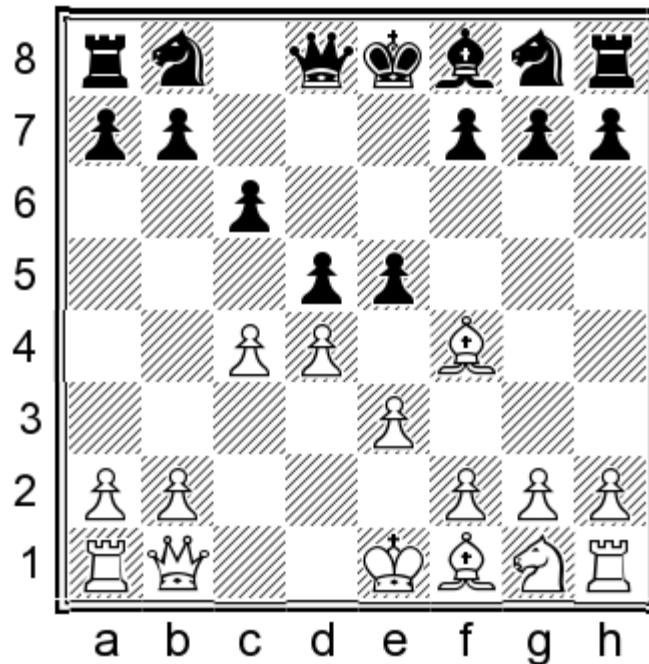
1-0

**F. Berkes (2645) — C. Lupulescu (2594)**

Dresden ol (Men) 38th Dresden (4), 16.11.2008

In this game we can see a Slav set-up with ...c6, ...♙f5 after which Black chose a very violent continuation with 4...♙b1 followed by ...e5, sacrificing the pawn just to spoil White's castling possibility. However, from very early on he was left without compensation and this game shows how White has to maintain sangfroid and punish unreasonable play!

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 c6 3.e3 ♙f5 4.c4 ♙xb1 5.♗xb1 e5±

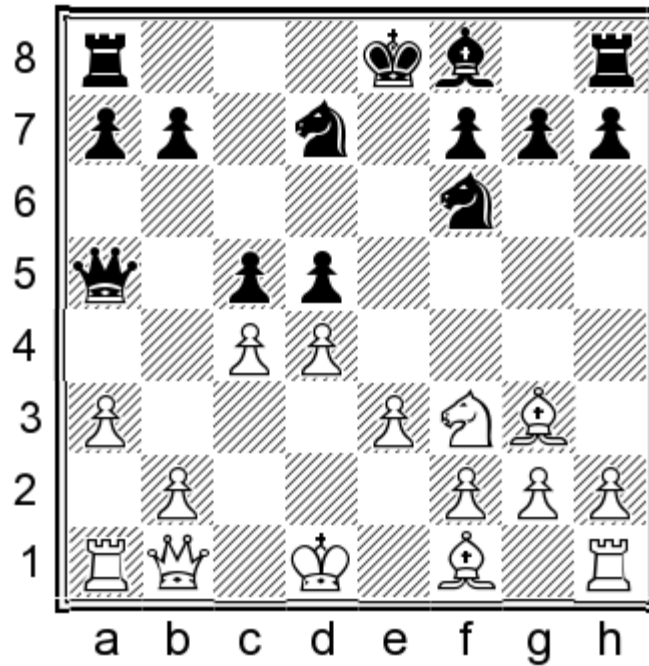


Violent play in the early part of the game can't bring success. The idea is to prevent castling and to develop the pieces quickly. Two games ago we saw the same idea with ...♙b1 in a similar position in the game Georgiev K.-Godena M. Padova Open 2014, but there Black didn't sacrifice a pawn to spoil White's castling ambitions. Black should play more solidly with 5...e6 6.c5! ♘d7 (6...b6 7.b4 bxc5 8.bxc5 ♗a5+ 9.♘d1±) 7.♘f3 ♘gf6 8.h3 ♘e4 9.♙d3 f5 10.♗c2! White don't need to hurry with castling (10.0-0?! g5! 11.♙h2 h5→) 10...♙e7 11.♙h2 0-0 12.0-0± Kovacevic,S (2380)-Varga,Z (2480) Harkany 1994

6. ♖xe5 ♜a5+ 7. ♔d1 ♞d7 8. ♙g3 c5

The only way to justify 5...e5. Black tries to open all files to the white king!

9. ♞f3 ♞gf6 10. a3!



I like this move! White threatens dc with b4 coming next, or immediately b4.

10...cxd4 11.exd4 ♙e7

Black had no time for 11...dxc4 12. ♙xc4 ♙e7 13. ♞e1+- when his king is weaker.

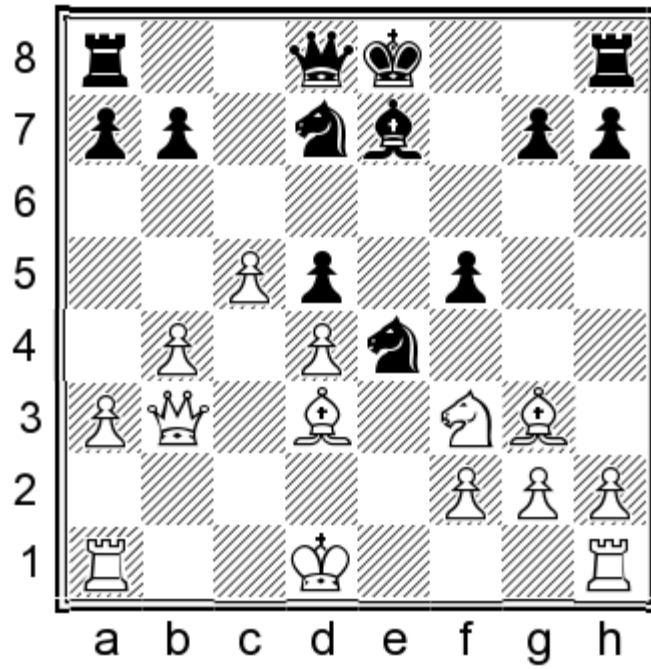
12.c5!

A logical decision: White closes the center, after which his king can feel safe.

12...♞e4 13. ♙d3 f5

Maintaining the knight on e4 but also weakening the diagonal a2-g8!

14.b4 ♜d8 15. ♜b3!



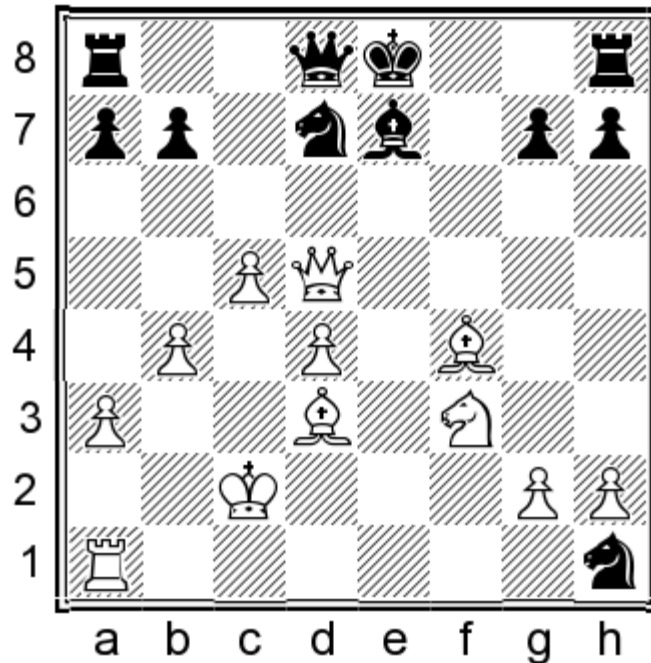
Of course White isn't afraid to enter complications. His king is safer and his pieces are better placed. Peaceable players will choose perhaps 15.♔c2±

**15...f4 16.♙xf4!**

White accepts the challenge!

**16...♜xf2+ 17.♔c2 ♜xh1 18.♚xd5+-**

It's very clear already that Black has no hope of saving the game. His king is bare and the knight on h1 falls.



**18...♜f6**

Black couldn't save his knight with 18...♖f2 19.♗c4 ♜f8 (19...♗f6 20.♞f7+ ♔d7 21.♗b5+ ♔c8 22.♞e6+ ♗d7 23.♞c6+! bxc6 24.♗a6#) 20.♞h5+ g6 21.♞xh7 ♜xf4 22.♞xg6+-

19.♗b5+ ♔f8 20.♞xd8+

Of course, White doesn't have to search for more than this pleasant endgame.

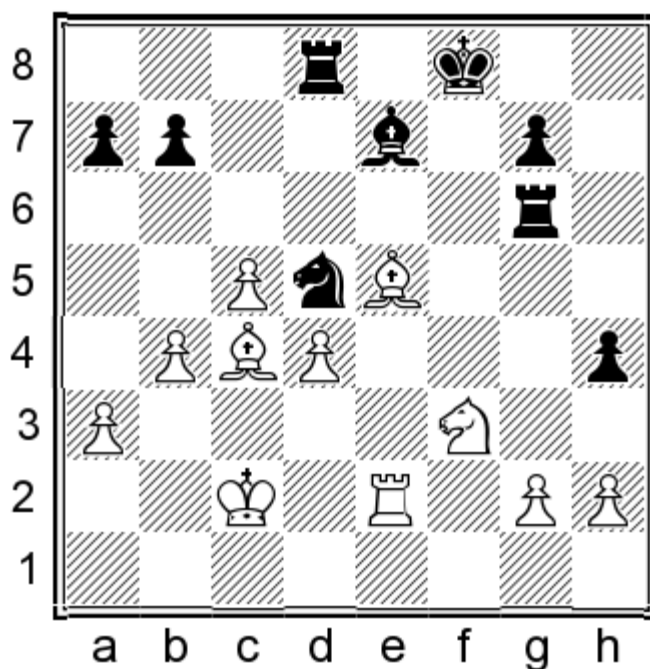
20...♜xd8 21.♞xh1 ♗d5

Blockading on d5, but it is short-lived!

22.♗g3 h5!?

Black seeks counterplay by pushing the pawn and bringing the rook into the game via h6! Very bad is 22...♗e3+? 23.♔d3 ♗xg2 24.♞g1+-

23.♞e1 h4 24.♗e5 ♜h6 25.♗c4 ♞g6 26.♞e2



Awaiting the opponent's quick surrender, White gives up one not-so-important pawn. I have no idea if it was a blunder or just good simplification. 26.g3+-

26...♞xg2 27.♞xg2 ♗e3+ 28.♔d3 ♗xg2 29.♔e4

Now the knight is far from events and shakily-placed!

29...♗f6 30.♗d6+ ♗e7 31.♗c7 ♜c8 32.♗e5 ♗f6 33.♗e6!

The knight on g2 is doomed and the rest of the game was just a hopeless fight from Black for his national team!

33...♜c6 34.♗h3 ♗xe5 35.♗xe5 ♞a6 36.♗xg2 ♞xa3 37.♔f5 ♞a2 38.♗xb7 ♞xh2 39.c6 ♜c2

1-0

## Conclusion:

Don't afraid to take a pawn and keep the king in the center! Believe in your position, because your natural play cannot be punished with violent play, especially not at such an early stage of the game!

**A. Kharlov (2555) — A. Dokutchaev (2420)**

RUS-chT Kazan (8), 1995

Here comes the one of the critical endgames in the London System. Black makes the Slav-set-up moves ...d5, ...c6, ...♙f5, ...e6 after which White reacts with c4 and then the typical ♖b3 — forcing the move ...♜b6 after which appears an endgame with better chances for White. In this game, Russian grandmaster Kharlov showed the essence of this endgame.

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3**

Be careful! Our move order is 2.♙f4 c6 3.e3 ♙f5 4.c4 e6 5.♘c3 ♘d7 6.♘f3! ♘gf6 7.♜b3 ♜b6 8.c5!

**2...♘f6 3.♙f4 c6 4.e3 ♙f5 5.c4**

One of the very rare lines in the “London” where you have to play c4 to seek an advantage, instead of the plan ♘bd2-c3. Black's bishop is “out” on f5 so White can now press the b7 pawn.

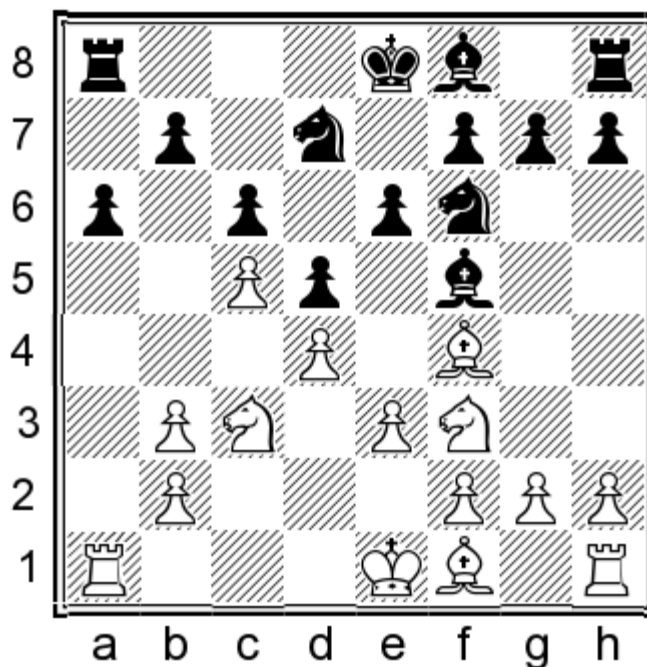
**5...e6 6.♘c3 ♘bd7 7.♜b3 ♜b6 8.c5!**

The idea is to force a better endgame with a space advantage!

**8...♜xb3 9.axb3±**

As I said in the introduction to CHAPTER 6, maybe this evaluation looks pretentious, but praxis proves it.

**9...a6**



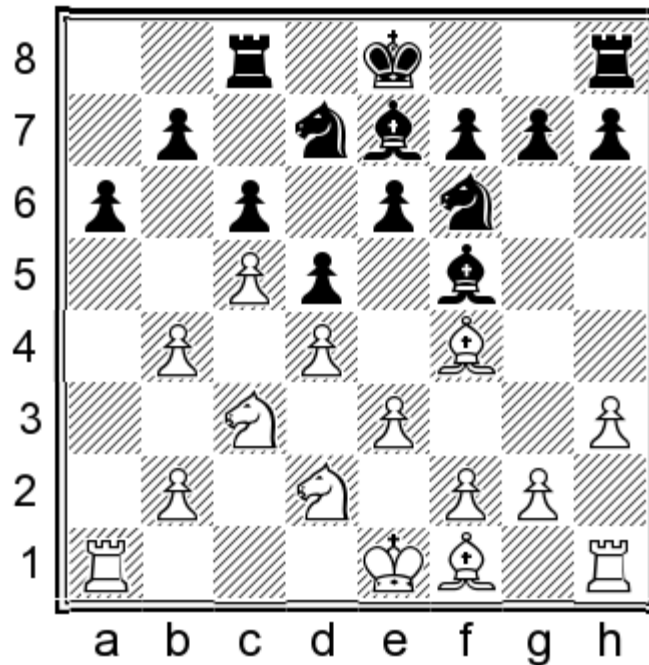
This is only move against White's plan of b4-b5. The typical move 9...♘h5?! doesn't work well 10.♙e5! a6 (10...♗xe5 11.♗xe5 ♗f6 12.b4± with next b5; 10...f6 11.♙c7! ♖c8 12.♙d6 ♙xd6 13.cxd6 a6 14.h3 g5 15.g4 ♙e4 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♗d2 ♗g7 18.h4! gxh4 19.♗xe4+-) 11.b4 ♖c8 12.h3 ♗hf6 (12...♗xe5 13.dxe5+-) 13.♙h2± and Black has achieved nothing compared with our main game! The plan is the same ♗d2-♗b3-♗a5

### 10.b4 ♖c8 11.h3

White must worry about his crucial piece in the forthcoming actions!

Black now threatened ...♗h5

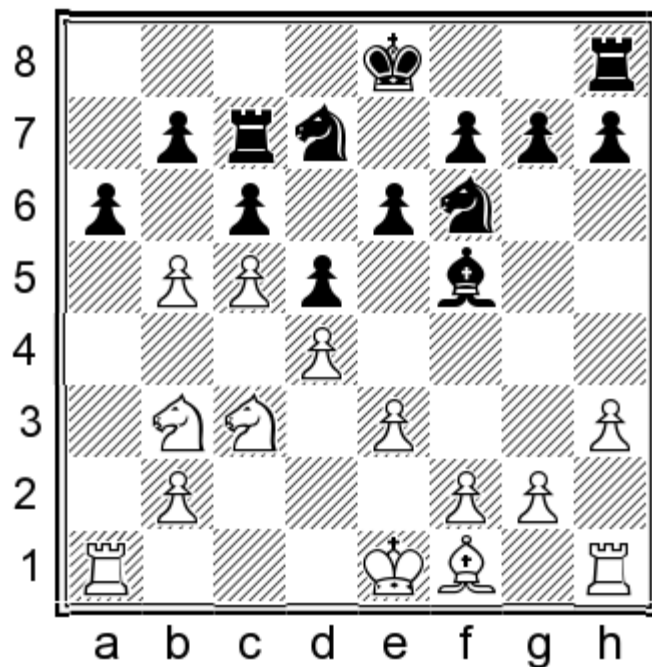
### 11...♙e7 12.♗d2!



This is the famous knight route ♗d2-♗b3-♗a5 which causes Black terrible trouble. By bringing the knight to a5, Black will be forced to give up his bishop.

### 12...0-0

Black is unable to exchange dark-squared bishops after 12...♙d8 13.♗b3 ♙c7? Now actually we see the main problem of Black's position: 14.♙xc7 ♖xc7 15.b5!



This is the point! The rook on h8 is undefended! 15...0-0

(15...cxb5 16. ♖xb5! axb5 17. ♖a8+ ♔e7 18. ♖xh8+--)

16.b6! The best way to win! 16...♖cc8 17. ♖a5 ♖b8 18. ♗xa6! bxa6 19. ♖xc6 and White's pawns on the queenside are unstoppable. 19...♖a8 20.b7 ♖ab8 21. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22.b4 ♗d3 23. ♔d2 ♗c4 24. ♖hb1 ♖e4+ 25. ♖xe4 dxe4 26.b5 axb5 27. ♖a8 ♗d5 28. ♖xb5 f5 29. ♖b6 ♔f7 30. ♔c3 ♔e7 31. ♖d6 g5 32. ♔b4 ♔f6 33. ♖xd5 exd5 34. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 35.c6 ♔e7 36. ♔c5 1-0 Grachev,B (2668)-Rychagov,A (2568) Moscow 2010

13. ♖b3 ♗d8 14. ♗d6!

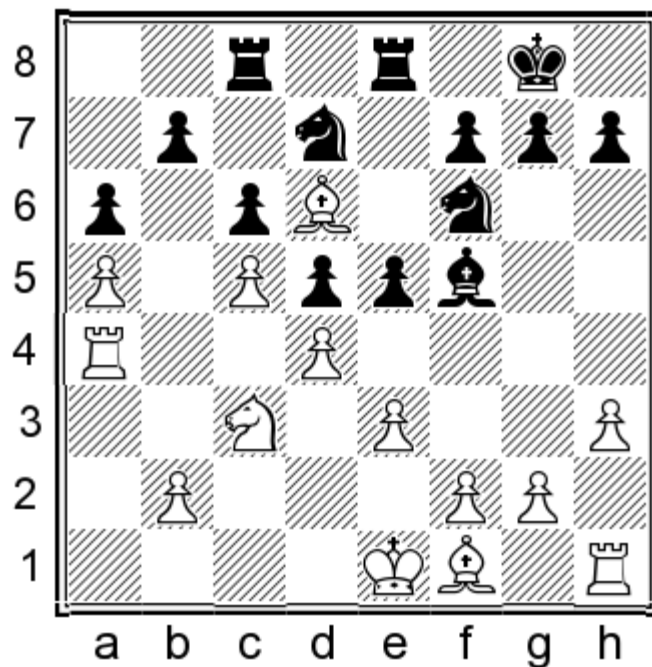
An important move when faced with the freeing move ...e5! With his bishop on d6, White is not forced to take de after ...e5. 14. ♖a5 is not bad, but here Black can gain some counterplay 14...♗xa5 15.bxa5 e5! 16.dxe5 ♖e4 17. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 18.e6 fxe6 19. ♗d6 ♖f7 20.f3 ♗g6 21. ♖a4 ♖e8 22. ♖b4 ♖f8 23. ♗e2 e5 24. ♔d2 ♖e6 25. ♖c1 ♖d8 26. ♖c3 ♗f5 27. ♖cb3 ♗c8 28. ♖b6 ♖e6 29. ♖3b4± Grachev,B (2602) -Malakhov,V (2690) Serpukhov 2007. White is still better, but for me more convincing looks to be the 14. ♗d6! from our game.

14...♖e8 15. ♖a5 ♗xa5 16.bxa5

Now White improves his pawn structure! This opens up new possibilities of bringing the rooks to the b-file pressuring the b7 pawn.

16...e5 17. ♖a4!

Another typical idea in this system and a very useful move with two ideas: Pressing the b7 pawn and controlling the d4 square.



17...♔c2

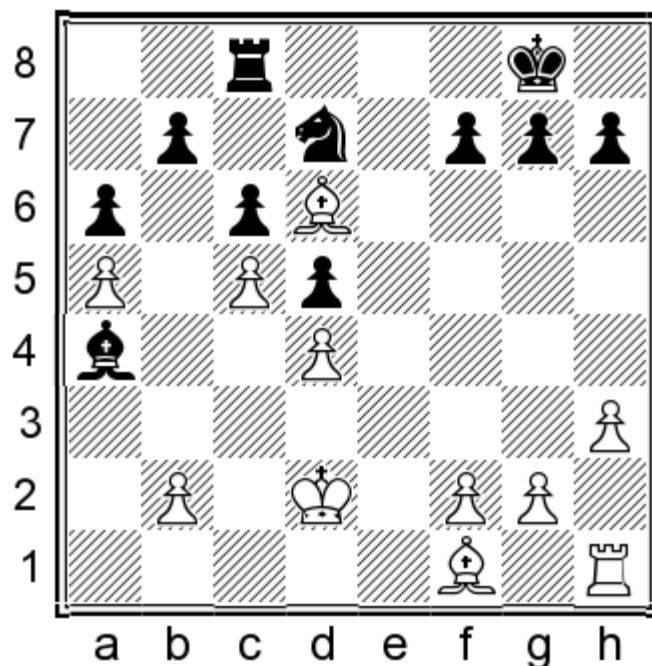
With this intermediate move, Black brings his bishop to b5 by force.

18.♖b4 exd4 19.♗xd4 ♘e4

Black forces exchanges because it's the only way to save the b7 pawn.

20.♘xe4 ♗xe4 21.♕d2 ♖xd4+ 22.exd4 ♙a4

Black was concerned about White's plan of h4-♖h3-♗b3 or the longer ♔e2-♖a1-♗a3-♗b3 and he want to put his bishop on b5 to defend the b7 pawn.



But now the diagonal h3-c8 is unprotected. I will show you what would happen in other cases. 22...♙g6 23.h4 ♖f6 24.♖h3! ♜e4+ 25.♜c1 ♖e8 (25... ♜xd6 26.cxd6 ♖d8 27.♖b3 ♖xd6 28.♖xb7±; 25... ♜xf2 26.♖b3+-) 26.♖b3 ♜xc5 27.♙xc5 ♖e1+ 28.♜d2 ♖xf1 29.♖xb7 h5 30.♖b6 ♖xf2+ 31.♜e3 ♖xg2 32.♖xa6 ♖xb2 33.♖a8+ ♜h7 34.a6+- and there is no defence against a7-♖b8;

22...♙f5 23.g4 ♙e6 24.♙d3 ♜f6 25.f3 ♜e8 26.♙g3 ♜c7 27.♖e1 ♜b5 28.♙f2± the plan is the simple f4-f5.

23.♙d3 ♜f6 24.♖e1 ♖e8 25.♖xe8+ ♜xe8 26.♙f5+-

Now White wins a pawn, but he needs to be very precise. Only with a concrete plan is it possible to win this position!

26...g6 27.♙c8 ♙b5 28.♙xb7 ♜g7!

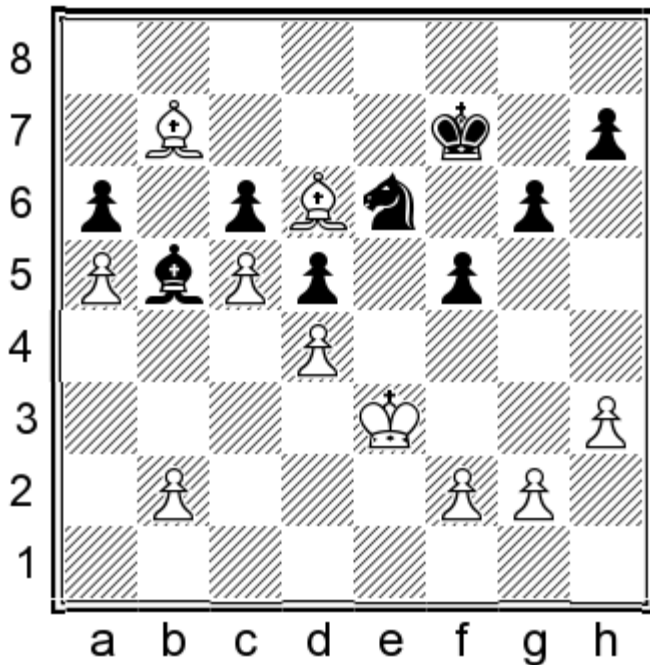
The best defence! The only good place for the knight is e6 which makes the penetration of White's king more difficult.

29.♙e7 f5

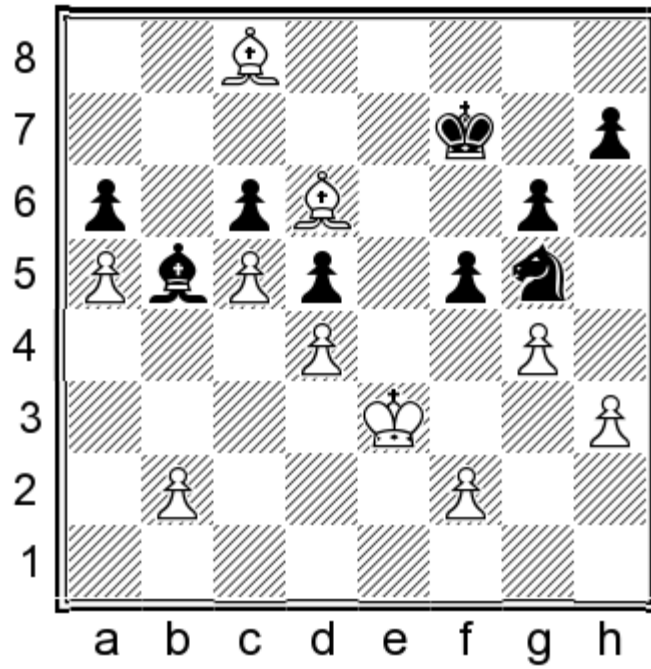
Black must take some space to avoid a complete stifling.

30.♜e3 ♜f7 31.♙d6 ♜e6

Black tries to construct a fortress!

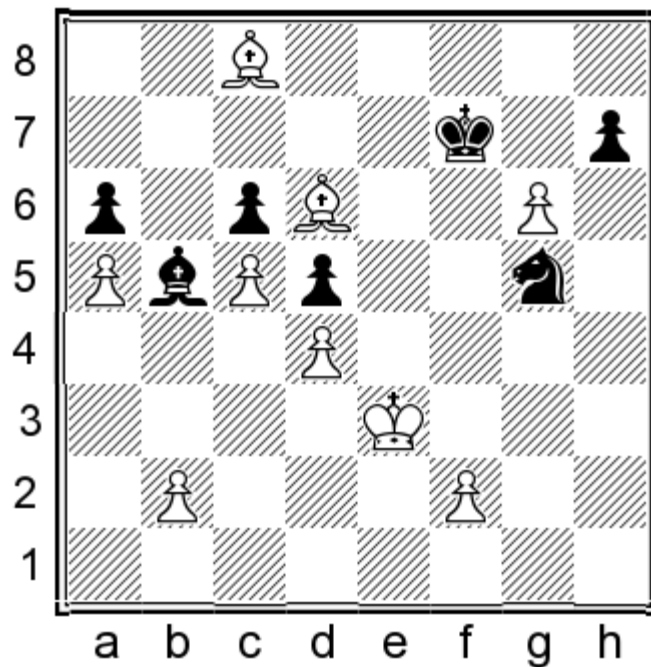


32.g4 ♜g5 33.♙c8?



An inaccurate move! Why give up the h-pawn and simplify the position? White could win by playing for zugzwang!  
 33.h4! ♖e6 34.gxf5 gxf5 35.♙c8 ♜f6 36.♙e5+ ♜f7 37.b3 ♙f1 38.h5 ♙b5 (38...h6 39.♙f4 ♖g7 40.♙d7 ♙b5 41.♙xh6 ♖xh5 42.♙xf5+-) 39.h6 ♙f1 40.♙d7 ♙b5 41.♙g3 ♜f6 (41...♜e7 42.♙c8 ♜f7 43.f4 ♜e7 44.♙h4+ ♜f7 45.♙d7○+-) 42.♙h4+ ♜f7 43.f4○+-

33...♖xh3 34.gxf5 ♖g5 35.fxg6+??



A very serious mistake after which there doesn't appear to be a way to win! Allowing 35...hg lets Black make a fortress. The pawn g6 controls the important squares h5-f5 for the entrance of the white king. The winning plan was to force Black into gxf5 to have a free f-pawn. Winning was 35.♙f4! ♖e4 (35...♜f6 36.fxg6 hxg6 37.♙xg5+! ♜xg5 38.b3 ♙f1 39.♙e6 ♙b5 40.♙d7○ Zugzwang! Black must allow ♙g4-♙e2 or ♜f4-♜e5! 40...♜f6 41.♙g4! ♜g5 42.♙e2+-) 36.f3 ♖f6 37.♙e6+ ♜g7 (37...♜e7 38.♙g5+-) 38.♙e5 h6 39.fxg6+- realising the plan to have a free f-pawn!

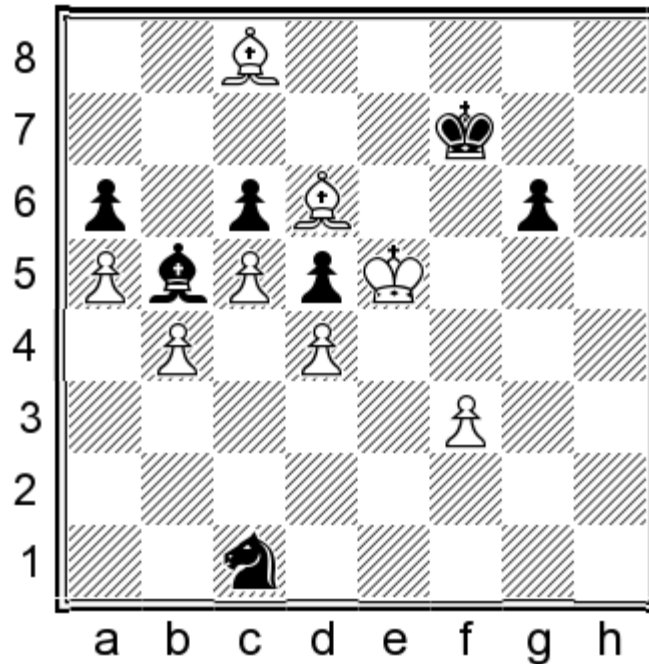
35...hxg6 36.♔f4 ♖e4! 37.f3 ♖d2

37...♖f2 also leads to a draw 38.b3 ♖d3+ 39.♔e3 ♖c1 40.b4 ♖a2 41.♔d2 ♖xb4=

38.b4 ♖b3?!

Why to leave the e5 square unprotected? 38...♖c4! =

39.♔e5 ♖c1??



This is losing! An incomprehensible mistake! Black only had to worry about king penetration. 39...♖d2 40.♔e6+ ♔g7 41.♔g4 ♔f7= with ♖c4 next.

40.♔e6+ ♔g7 41.♔e7

The king gains entry, which spells the end of the game!

41...♖d3+ 42.♔d6 ♖xb4 43.♔d7

Black's pawn on c6 is doomed and he doesn't have defence against ♔h4-♔e1!

1-0

### Conclusion:

This endgame is playing for one goal! The essential plan is to make the knight maneuver with ♖d2-♖b3-♖a5 with the idea of pressuring the b7 pawn, after which Black is forced to give up his dark-squared bishop. The biggest problem in Black's position is a permanent weak pawn on b7 and a lack of space.

E. Prie (2504) — P. Varga (2446)

FRA-chT Top 16 GpB France (4), 30.04.2009

Compared with the previous game, again in the same ending, Black chose another defensive plan of keeping his king in the center, with the idea of bringing the knight to b5 via e8-c7. White reacted well by giving up the “strong London Bishop” for the knight on c7, followed by ♖b6, and Black was left with an isolated rook which was decisive in this game.

1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c6 3.e3 ♗f5 4.c4 e6 5.♘c3 ♘d7

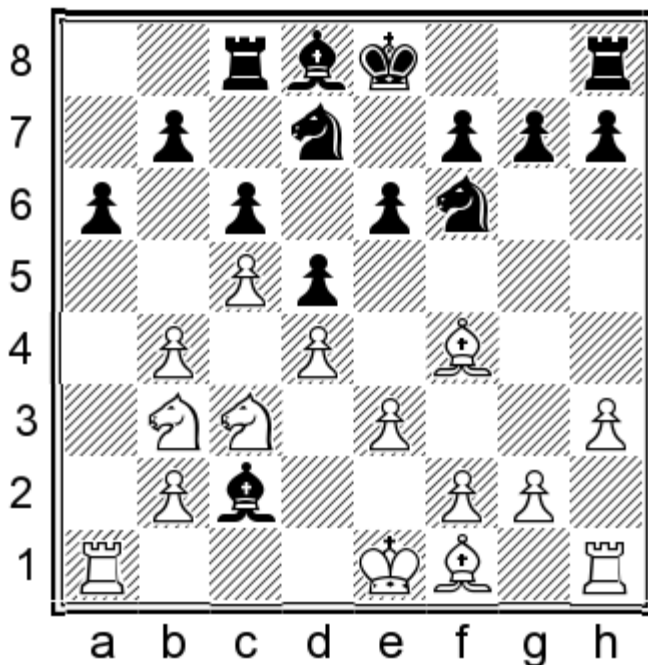
Black doesn't gain anything from 5...♖b6 6.♖c1 ♘d7 7.c5! ♖d8 8.♘f3 ♘gf6 9.h3± with typical play on the queenside!

6.♘f3!

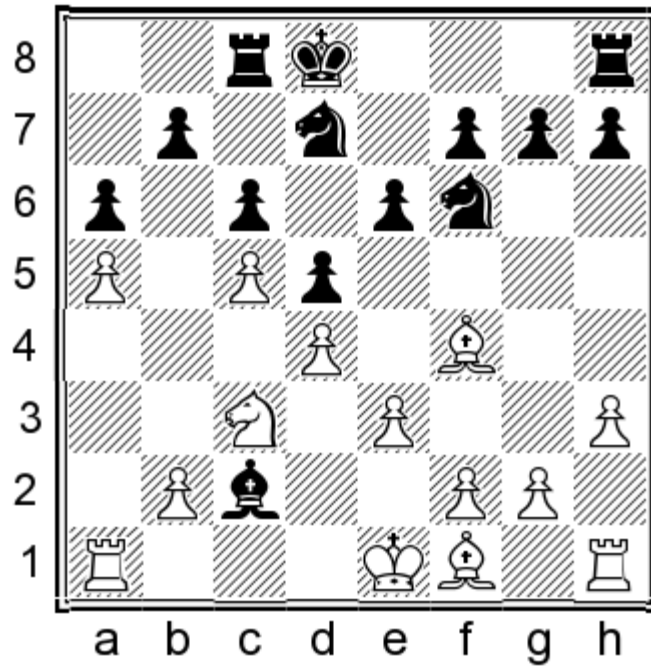
Don't forget move-orders! 6.♖b3 ♖b6 7.c5 ♖xb3 8.axb3 e5±

6...♘gf6 7.♖b3 ♖b6 8.c5 ♖xb3 9.axb3± a6 10.b4 ♖c8 11.h3 ♗e7 12.♘d2! ♗d8 13.♘b3 ♗c2

Here is the difference compared to the previous game! With 13...♗c2 Black forces White to play ♘a5.



14.♘a5 ♗xa5 15.bxa5 ♖d8



Black chooses another plan, to keep the king in the center, closer to the weak pawn on b7.

**16.♔d2 ♘g6 17.♞a4**

Don't forget this plan!

**17...♞a8**

The only way to protect the b7 pawn.

**18.♞b4 ♞a7**

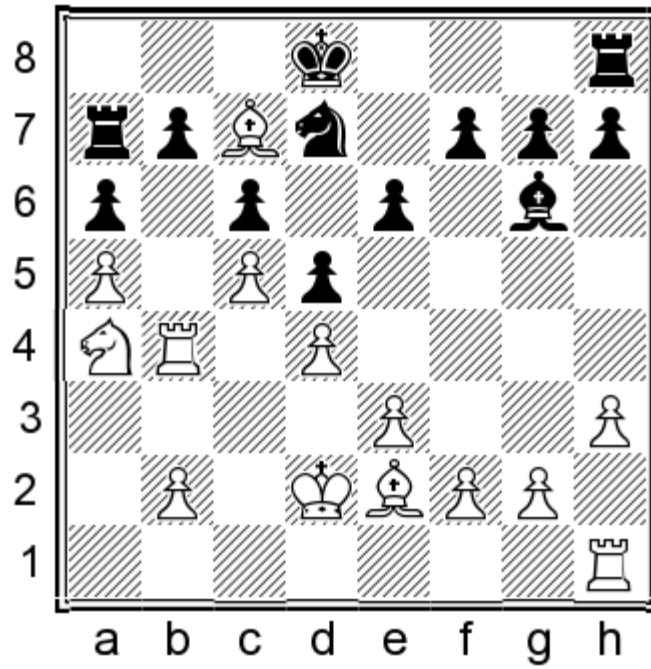
Black's rook is now awkwardly placed!

**19.♙e2 ♘e8**

By putting his knight on b5 Black wants to stultify White's plan of ♞a4-♞b4.

**20.♘a4 ♘c7 21.♙xc7+!?**

A concrete decision. White gives up his strong bishop for the plan of isolating Black's rook!



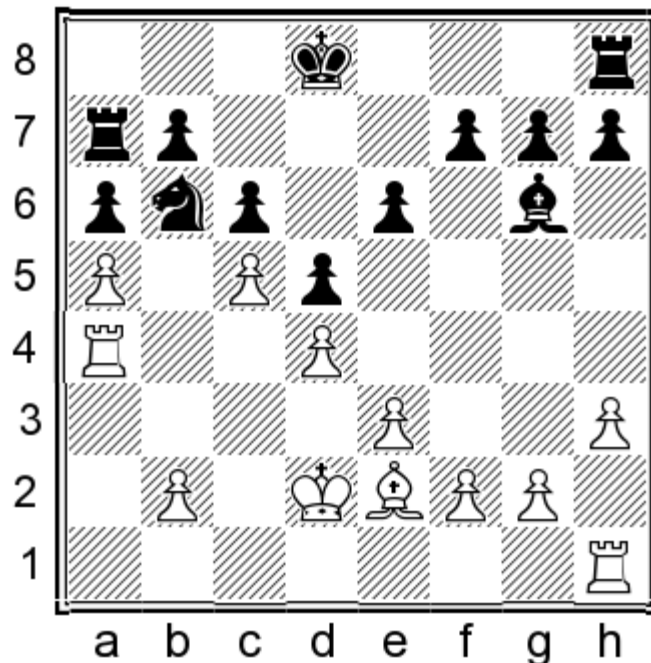
Also a good plan was to grab some space on the kingside with 21.h4 h5 22.♖b6 ♗b5 23.♞a4 ♗xb6 24.axb6 ♞a8 25.♞h3 ♔d7 26.♙e5 ♞ag8 27.♞g3 ♞h7 28.♞g5± and now Black's knight on b5 is isolated, which means White's plan is to open the position on the kingside with g4 at some moment.

21...♔xc7 22.♗b6 ♔d8 23.♞a4

It's a fact that Black plays a rook down!

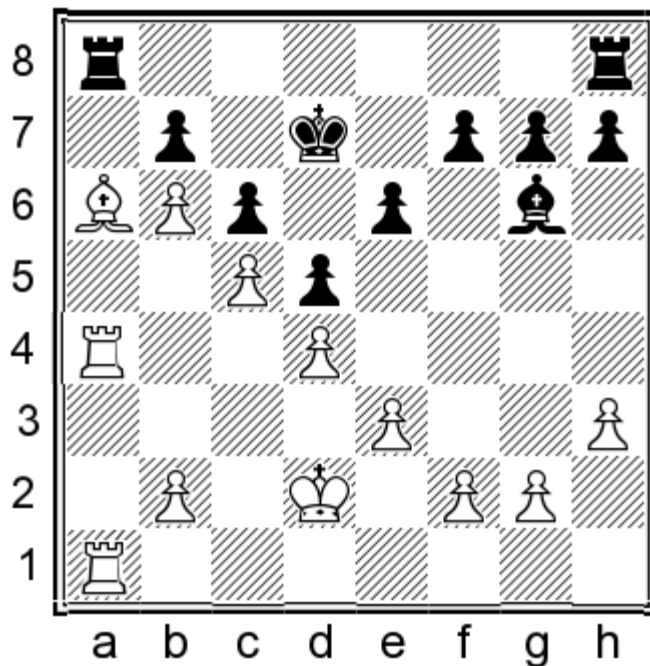
23...♞e8

23...♗xb6?



with the idea free the rook never works because White penetrates on the a-file after 24.axb6 ♞a8 25.♞ha1 ♔d7

26. ♖xa6!



26... ♖xa6 27. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 28. ♖xa6+ – Black is helpless! His bishop is useless and can't help in the fight against the dangerous pawns.

**24.h4!**

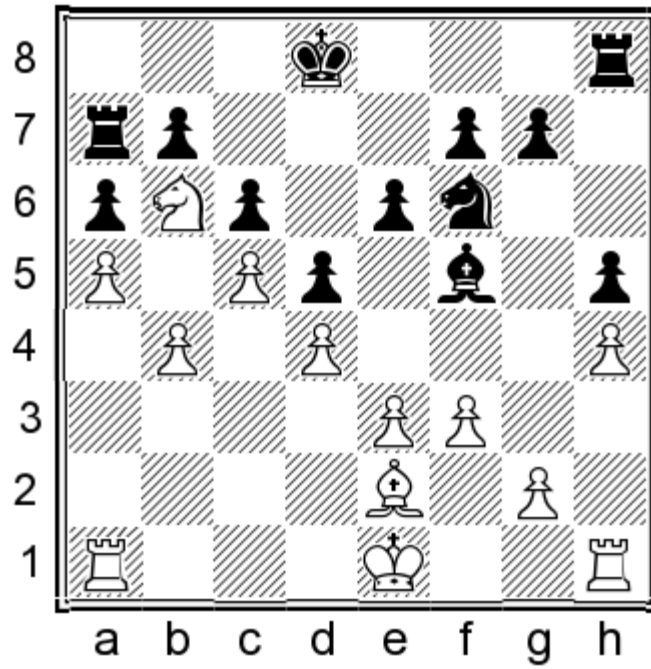
As usual, you have to play on the kingside or in the center when your opponent has an isolated piece on the queenside.

**24...h5 25.b4 ♗f6 26.f3**

White grabs space and the important squares!

**26...♗f5 27.♖aa1 ♖h8 28.♔e1!**

Now White's king heads to the kingside!



**28...♙g6 29.♔f2 ♚e7 30.♖a3 ♜f5**

Black doesn't have an active plan and he must simply "sit and wait".

**31.♔g3 ♞d7 32.♞ha1 f6**

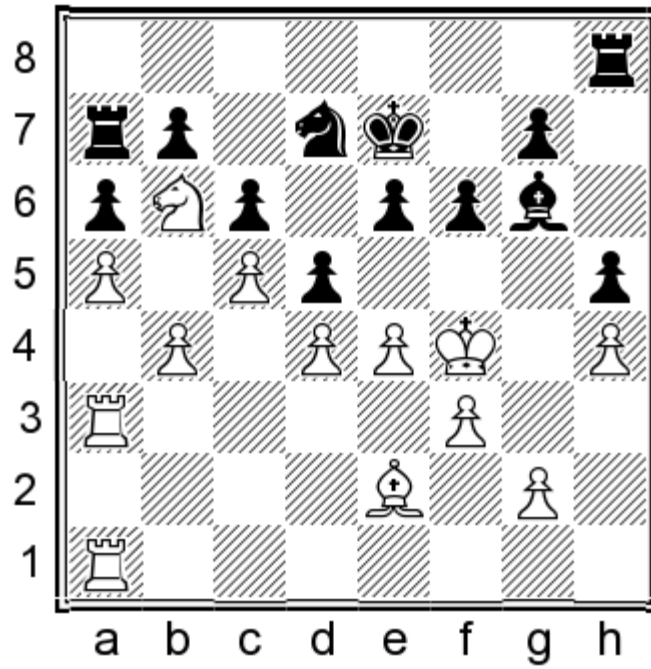
As I said before, the plan with 32...♞xb6 never works, e.g. 33.axb6 ♞aa8 34.♙xa6 bxa6 35.♞xa6 ♞xa6 36.♞xa6+—

**33.♔f4**

White has improved his king, which is very important in the endgame, but a factor which also helps in operations in the center and on the kingside.

**33...♙g6 34.e4!**

White has prepared everything he could for opening the position in the center.



**34...dxe4 35.fxe4 e5+**

Black couldn't just await a simple death so he is tries to play actively.

**36.dxe5 ♖xe5**

On the first sight Black has improved his position. His knight on e5 looks nice but White in return has gained the open d file — and the rook on a7 still doesn't have any perspective.

**37.♖d1 ♕f7 38.♖d4 ♕e6 39.♖a1 g6**

The rook cannot enter in the game while h5 hangs.

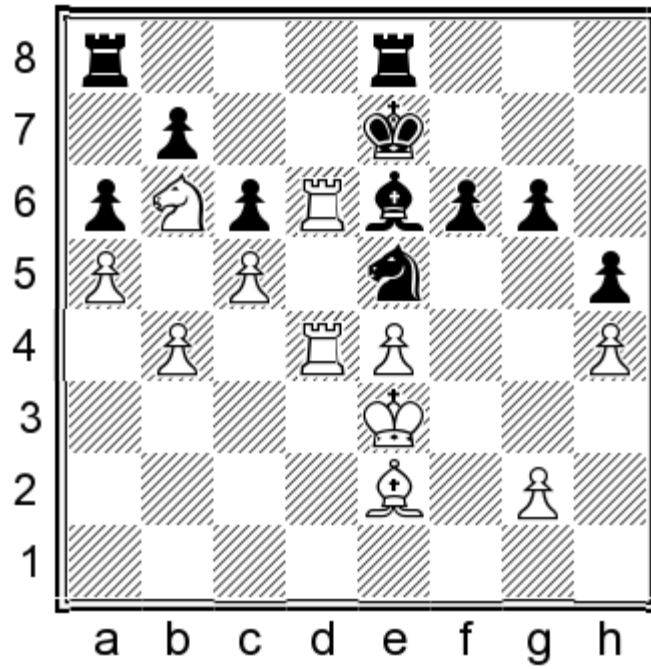
**40.♖ad1 ♖e8 41.♖d6 ♖f8 42.♖1d4**

White has improved the position of his pieces to the maximum. At this moment White provokes his opponent a little bit, offering an exchange!

**42...♖e8**

Accepting the provocation with 42...♗f7 leads to an easy loss 43.♕c4! ♗xd6 (43...♕xc4 44.♖d7+!+–) 44.cxd6+ ♔f7 45.♕xe6+ ♔xe6 46.d7 ♖d8 47.♖d1 ♔f7 48.e5+–

**43.♕e3 ♖aa8**

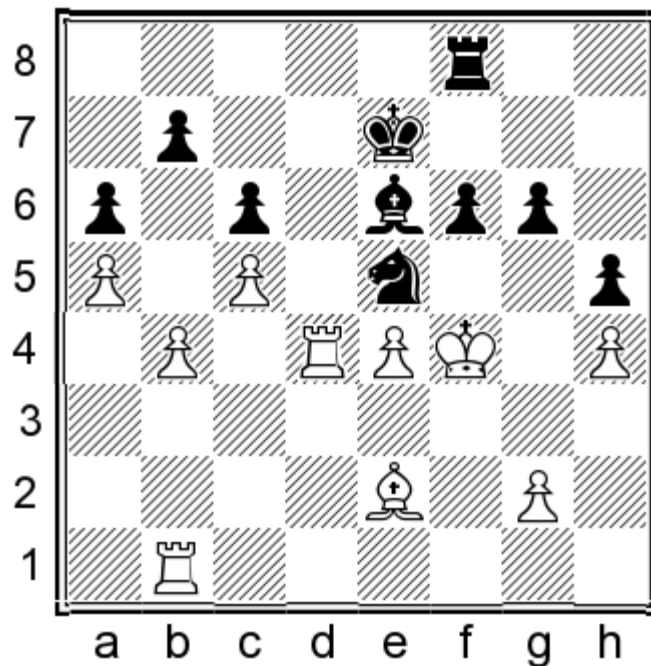


Black loses patience and decides not to think about his rook anymore. Black will now participate in the defense with all his pieces. In the case of passive defence White can break through the position after 43...♖f8 44.♙d1! ♜e8 45.♞xe6+! ♔xe6 46.♙b3+ ♔e7 47.♞d6 ♜f8 (47...g5 48.♙d4 gxh4 49.♞e6+ ♔f8 50.♞xf6+ ♔g7 51.♞f5 ♜g6 52.e5±) 48.♙f4 ♔e8 49.♙e6 ♜h8 50.♜d7! ♜xd7 51.♞xd7 ♜f8 52.♞g7+-

**44.♜xa8 ♜xa8 45.♙f4 ♜f8 46.♙d1**

Now White finds a great plan to exchange the bishops!

**46...♜h8 47.♞6d4 ♜f8 48.♞b1!**



White finds a good maneuver, putting his bishop on b3.

48...♖c8 49.♗d1 ♜g8 50.♗b3

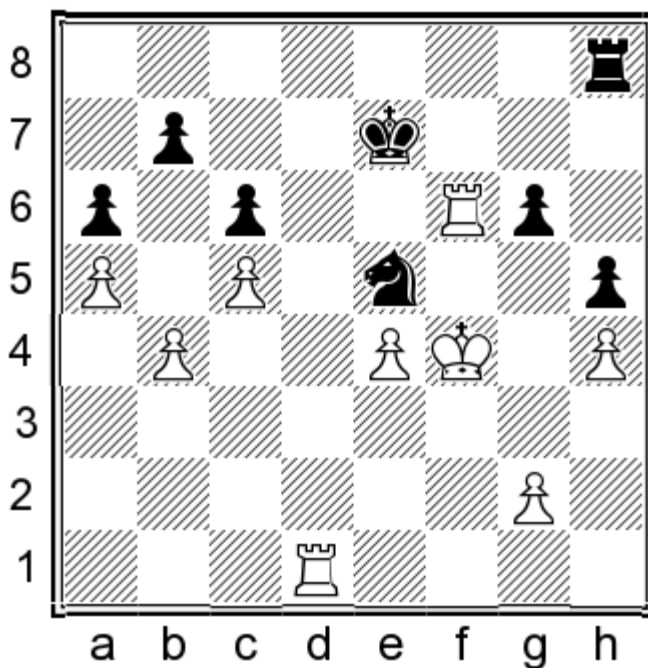
A very important bishop is killed and white uses that to play against the weak point f6!

50...♗xb3 51.♞xb3 ♜c8 52.♞b1 ♜f8 53.♞bd1 ♜c8 54.♞d6

With persistent maneuvering, White has reached a winning position! Now the upcoming ♜f6 leads to insoluble problems for Black.

54...♞h8 55.♞xf6!

The only winning way! Without this idea it's not clear how White can win!



55...♕xf6 56.♞d6+ ♕e7 57.♕xe5+-

A pawn up and too many weaknesses in Black's position promises an easy win.

57...♞g8 58.♕f4

Now White goes to take another pawn!

58...♞f8+ 59.♕g5 ♞f2 60.♞xg6 ♕f7

60...♞xg2+ 61.♕xh5 ♞b2 62.♞g7+ ♕f6 63.♞xb7+-

61.♕xh5

The rest of the game does not require comment in view of White being three pawns up. The remaining moves were just filling out the scoresheet!

61...♞b2 62.g4 ♞xb4 63.e5 ♞c4 64.e6+ ♕e7 65.♞g5 ♕xe6 66.♕g6 ♞f4 67.h5 ♞f8 68.h6 ♞g8+ 69.♕h5 ♞h8 70.♞g7 ♕d5 71.g5 ♕xc5 72.h7 b6 73.axb6 ♕xb6 74.g6

Conclusion: In this game the conclusion is the same as the previous: that this endgame is playing only for one result. The difference was only in the different unsuccessful defensive plan which Black used in this really difficult endgame.

**1-0**

# CHAPTER SEVEN

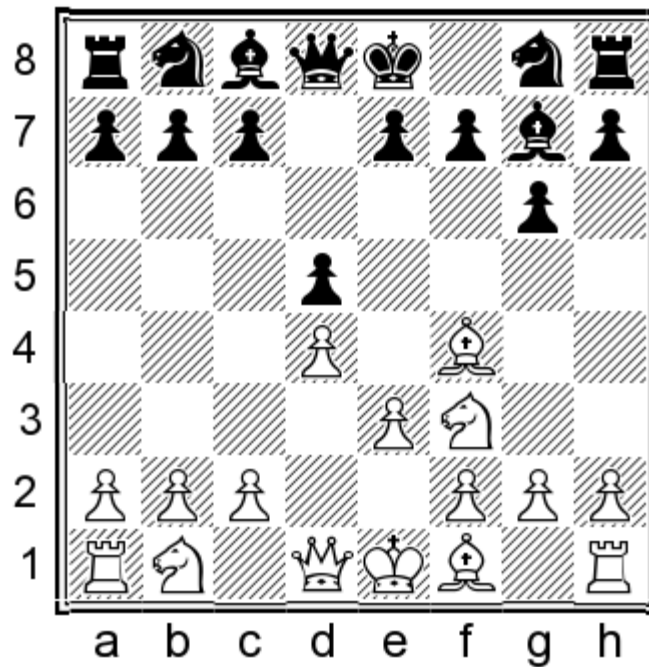
## GRÜNfeld SET-UP

In this set-up against the London System, Black plays the position as he would the Grünfeld. His idea is to create pressure on White's center with c5 and if its possible also with e5. Comparing with other lines from earlier chapters, here White is playing mostly on queenside!

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 g6

2...♗f6 3.e3 g6 -is the same

3.e3 ♗g7 4.♗f3

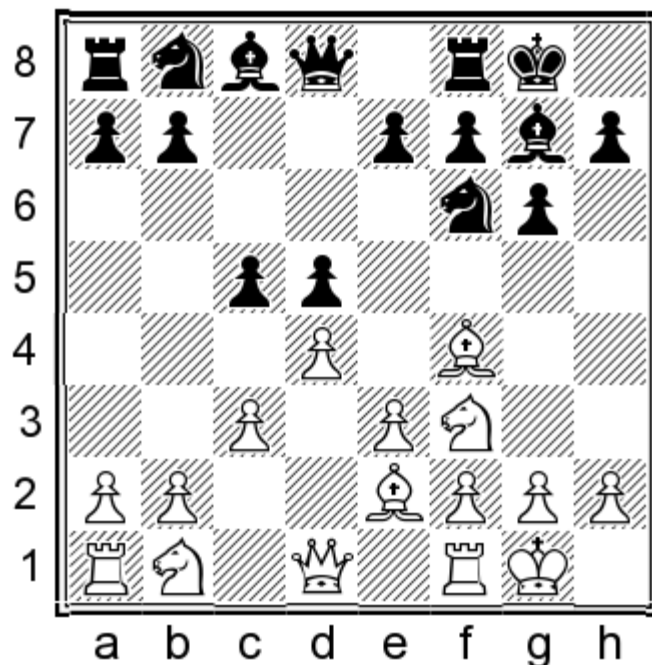


In this position it is possible to play 4.c4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 0-0 transposing to the well-known line in the Grünfeld where in recent times at the highest level Black' has achieved good positions and results. With ...c5 Black attacks the center and bishop on g7 becomes very strong. It's not to my taste and I like more to play against the bishop g7 while building some kind of fortress with the pawns on c3-d4-e3!

4...♗f6

4...c5 doesn't make a difference and transposes to the main position after 5.c3

5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.c3



This is the critical position which will be discussed in this chapter. White's idea is to have a stable center and to play mostly on the queen-side and against the bishop on g7. In the same time very important is to take care about e5 square, otherwise after e5 move, bishop from g7 can become strong. Black uses two plans usually. The most common is ...♘c6 with the idea being to play ...♗d7 and then ...e5, while the other is ...♗bd7 with ...b6. It's very important to remember that White doesn't need to spend time on the h3 move securing the bishop, because Black cannot take the bishop pair with ♗h5 apropos he doesn't have time for it.

7...♗c6 8.♗e5!

See: Burmakin V.-Jerez Perez A. Sitges op 2009. and Sitnikov A.-Kovchan A. UKR chT 2011.

**V. Burmakin (2627) — A. Jerez Perez (2388)**

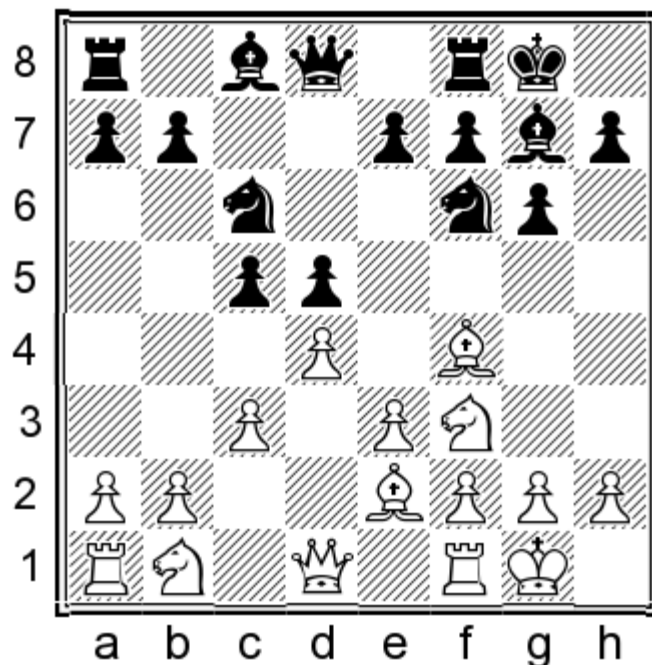
Sitges op 35th Sitges (8), 29.07.2009

In this game Black chose a plan involving the Grünfeld set-up. White responded with a very concrete plan using an early 8.♗e5, creating pressure in the center. Black's reaction with 8...cd was bad because he gave up on the center after which White obtained easy play on the queenside and entering an endgame! In this game GM Burmakin Vladimir shows a great recipe of how to play the ensuing symmetrical endgame against bishop on g7.

**1.d4 ♗f6**

Our move order is 1...d5 2.♗f4 ♗f6 3.e3 g6 4.♗f3 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.c3 ♗c6 8.♗e5

**2.♗f3 g6 3.♗f4 ♗g7 4.e3 0-0 5.♗e2 d5 6.0-0 c5 7.c3 ♗c6**



From a different move-order we finally reach the position of interest to us! The other plan is 7...♖bd7 8.♗e5 b6 9.♗d2 ♕b7 10.a4 a6 11.b4± with the idea to open the b file, and if Black continues with 11...c4 12.♙f3 b5 13.♚c2 then White will have a free hand to invoke the plan e4!

7...cxd4 8.exd4 ♗c6 9.h3 is a transposition to the game from CHAPTER 1. Kovacevic V.-Mikhalchishin A. Pula 1980.

### 8.♗e5!

This move is designed against 3 possible plans for Black. They are ...♗h5 with the plan of taking the bishop pair, ...♗d7 with the idea of ...e5, and ...b6 planning to complete development. For example 8.♗bd2 ♗h5! 9.♙g5 (9.dxc5 ♗xf4 10.exf4 d4! 11.cxd4 ♗xd4 12.♗c4 ♚d5 13.♗xd4 ♚xd4 14.♚xd4 ♙xd4=) 9...h6 10.♙h4 g5 11.♗e1 (11.♙g3 ♗xg3 12.hxg3 b6 with pleasant position for Black) 11...cxd4! 12.exd4 (12.cxd4 ♗f4! 13.♙g3 ♗xe2+ 14.♚xe2 ♙f5 15.♗d3 ♚b6) 12...♗f4 13.♙g3 ♗xe2+ 14.♚xe2 ♙f5 15.♗d3 e6=;

Or 8.h3 ♗d7 9.♗bd2 ♚e8! Black has to make a useful move and then ...e5 is coming. (Black doesn't have to hurry with 9...e5 10.dxe5 ♗dxe5 11.♗xe5 ♗xe5 12.♗f3 ♗xf3+ 13.♙xf3 ♙e6 14.♚b3± with unpleasant pressure on the pawn d5.) 10.♗b3 c4 11.♗bd2 e5 12.dxe5 ♗dxe5 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5=

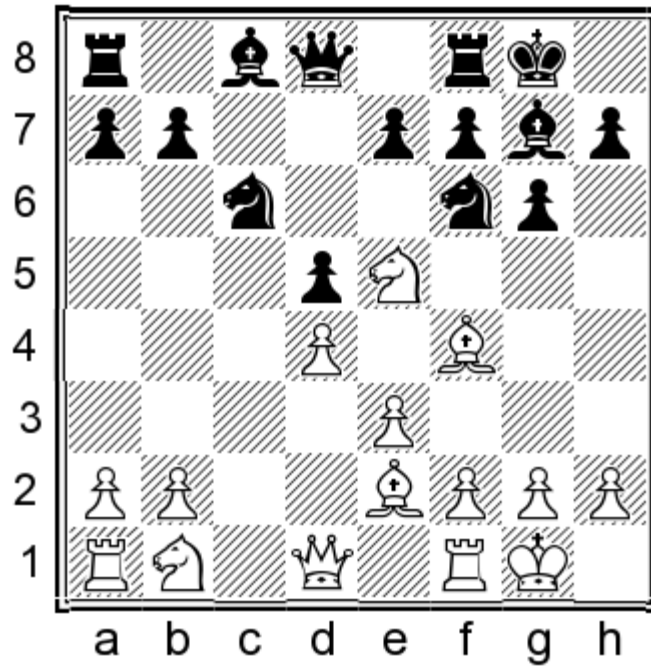
### 8...cxd4?!

Black clarifies the center instead of keeping the tension. 8...♗d7 9.♗xd7 ♙xd7 10.dxc5 e5 11.♙g3 ♙e6 12.♗d2 f5 13.f4 d4 14.♙c4± Rivas Pastor-Fries Nielsen Groningen 1979.

8...♗xe5 9.♙xe5 ♚b6 (9...b6 10.dxc5! bxc5 11.c4± Black's center is unstable now and the plan ♗c3-♙f3 can cause him serious difficulties.) 10.♚b3 c4 11.♚xb6 axb6 12.♙f3 ♙e6 13.♗a3 ♚a5 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.e4±

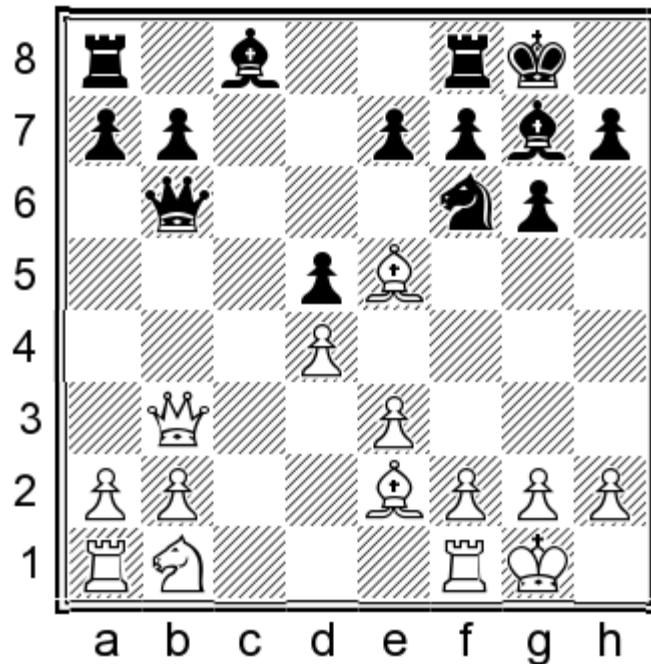
The best move is 8...♚b6!? — see next game.

### 9.cxd4!±



Although the position is symmetrical, White has easier play. The biggest problem in Black's position is the bishop on g7.

9...♘xe5 10.♙xe5 ♚b6 11.♚b3!



Showing great understanding. White enters an endgame with doubled-pawns which will help in his actions on the queenside. The a-file is of crucial importance and also promising was 11.♘c3!? ♚xb2 12.♙xf6 ♚xc3 13.♙xe7±

11...♚xb3 12.♙xb3 ♙d7 13.♘c3 ♙c6

A little bit of a strange position for the bishop, but played with the idea of ...♘e4 at some point.

14.b4

Now the doubled pawns start to prove very useful!

**14...a6 15.♖a5!**

A nice move which pressures the d5 pawn, with the idea of doubling rooks at the same time!

**15...e6 16.♖fa1 ♜ac8 17.b5?!**

White frees himself of the doubled pawns, but this allows some counterplay. Better was to play 17.f3 first, preventing any counterplay with ...♗e4, and only then continue with b5!

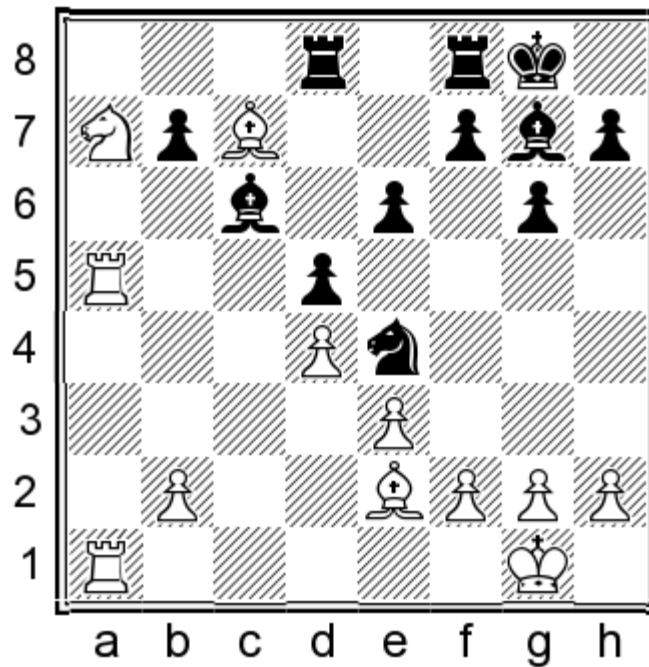
**17...axb5 18.♗xb5 ♗e4?**

A serious mistake after which White obtains a big advantage. It was a good idea, but a bad move order! Black had to seek relief in 18...♙xb5 19.♖xb5 ♗e4! 20.f3 ♙xe5 21.fxex4 ♙f6± and it seems that he has good chances to make a draw!

**19.♗a7!**

After 19.♙xg7?! the defence for Black is easier. White's bishop is stronger and he has to use it.

**19...♜cd8 20.♙c7!±**



After this maneuver all the co-ordination of Black's pieces is violated. The bishop on c6 especially is a problem.

**20...♜d7 21.♙b6 ♙f6**

Black can't open his bishop with 21...e5? in view of 22.f3 ♗d6 23.e4! ♗e8 (23... ♗c8 24.♗xc8 ♜xc8 25.♖a8 ♖f8 26.♙c5 ♖fd8 27.♙e7+-) 24.exd5 ♖xd5 25.♗xc6 bxc6 26.♖xd5 cxd5 27.♙c5+-

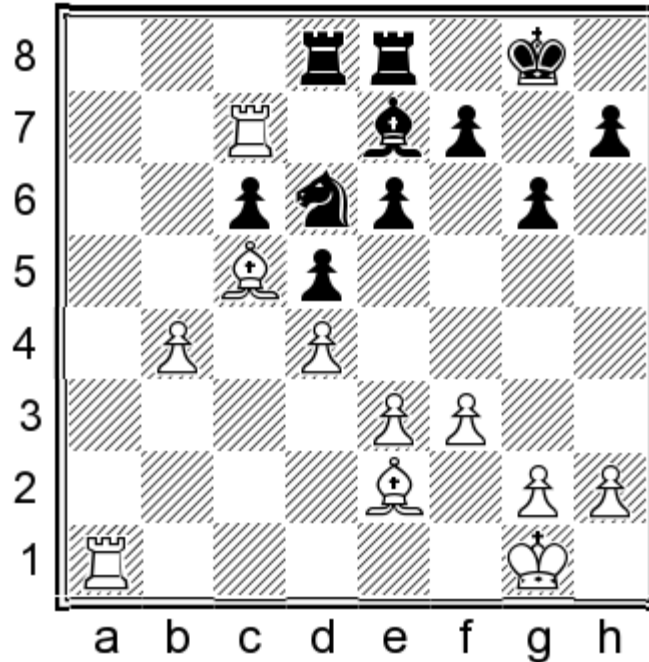
**22.f3 ♗d6 23.♙c5 ♙e7 24.b4+-**

Now another b pawn creates problems for Black.

24...♖dd8 25.♗xc6!

A good exchange because the rook enters the 7th rank.

25...bxc6 26.♖a7 ♜fe8 27.♖c7



A faster win came from 27.♖1a6! ♗c8 28.♖c7 ♜xc5 29.dxc5! d4 (29...♗e7 30.♖aa7 ♜f8 31.b5+-) 30.exd4 ♖xd4 31.♖a8 ♗d6 32.♖ca7+-

27...♗f5 28.♖aa7 ♜xc5 29.dxc5 d4

What else? The pawns on c6 and f7 hang!

30.e4 d3 31.♜xd3 ♖xd3 32.exf5 exf5 33.♖xf7

Rooks on the 7th rank are a nightmare in rook endgames!

33...♖e2

Black tries to achieve the same White's 2nd rank!

34.♖g7+!

A nice check, removing Black's king from the h-pawn.

34...♜f8 35.♖gd7

Now is the right time to exchange one pair of rooks and kill off any Black counterplay!

35...♖xd7 36.♖xd7 ♖b2

Black couldn't save the pawn with 36...♜g8 because 37.b5 comes, e.g. 37...cxb5 38.c6+-



A very natural move for Black! Compared with the previous game, here Black didn't clarify the center with 8...cxd4.

### 9. ♖b3 ♜xe5?!

After this move, White's pressure on the d5 pawn is bigger. A famous grandmaster reacted the best and the most active way in this position with 9...♞e4! Adranov N.-Smirin I. URS ch T 1988. 10.f3! ♞d6 (10...cxd4? 11. ♞xc6 bxc6 12.fxe4±; 10...♞f6 11. ♞d3 c4 12. ♖xb6 axb6 13. ♞b4 ♞a4 14.a3± White has a clear plan to play for e4!) 11.♞d1! ♞e6 12.♞a3 this position is perhaps not better for White, but I like it because the endgames that may arise hold good prospects for White. For example 12...f6 (12...c4 13. ♖xb6 axb6 14.e4±) 13.♞d3 c4 14.♖xb6 axb6 15.♞f2±

### 10. ♞xe5±

The pressure in the center and on the d5 pawn is now evident.

### 10...♞g4?

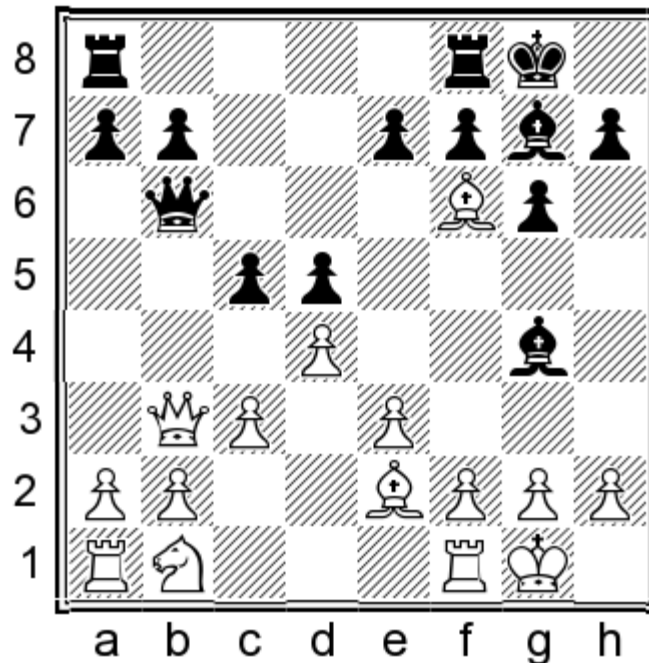
Black didn't evaluate the consequences of this move very well. He could choose some other moves which lead to only slightly worse positions, e.g. 10...♞e6 11.♖xb6 axb6 12.♞c7 ♞d7 13.♞a3 ♞fc8 14.♞b5± or

10...c4 11.♖xb6 axb6 12.♞f3 ♞e6 13.♞a3 ♞a5 14.♞xf6 ♞xf6 15.e4±

10...♖c6 11.dxc5 ♖xc5 12.♞a3 b6 13.♞d4 ♖c6 14.♞fd1 ♞b7 15.♞f3±

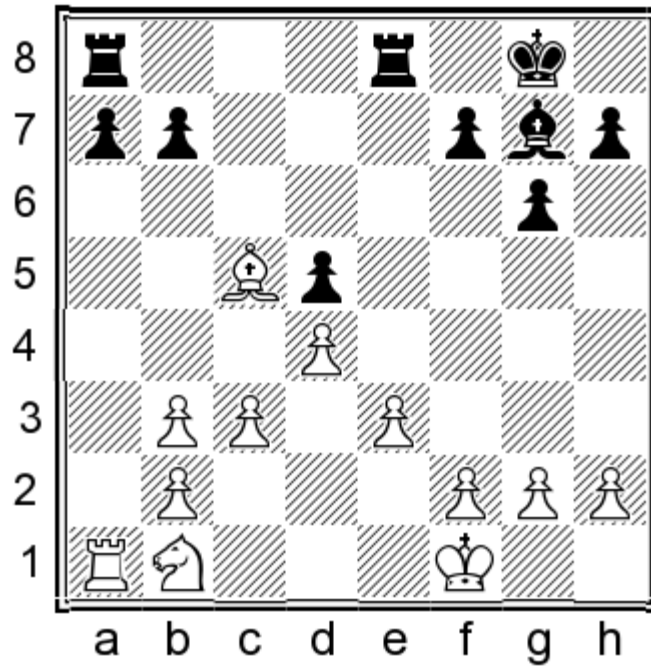
10...♖xb3 11.axb3 ♞d7 12.♞xg7 ♞xg7 13.dxc5 ♞xc5 14.b4 ♞e4 15.♞d1 ♞e6 16.♞d2 ♞xd2 17.♞xd2±

### 11. ♞xf6!



White accepts the challenge and the next four moves are forced!

11...♞xe2 12.♞xe7 ♞fe8 13.♞xc5 ♖xb3 14.axb3 ♞xf1 15.♞xf1±

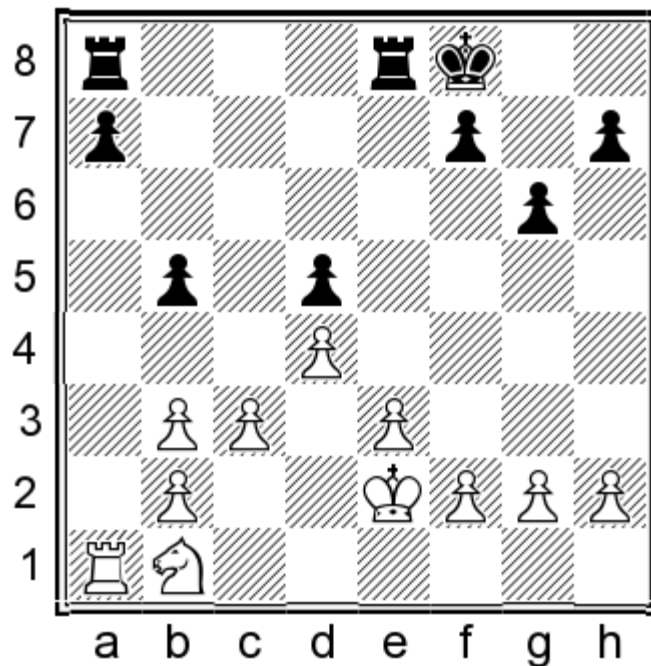


In the end White has profited with two pawns for the exchange, which guarantees a stable advantage especially thanks to the very healthy pawn structure. Black doesn't have any open files for his rooks, which prevents them from showing their natural strength!

15...b6 16.♙d6 ♟f8 17.♟xf8 ♔xf8 18.♚e2?!

Of course the place for the king is in the center, but before this White should prevent any eventual counterplay, so 18.♞a6!± fixing the pawns on the queenside!

18...b5?



The wrong decision: creating a weak point on c5 and the a-pawn starts to be a weakness. Black could best utilise his chances with 18...a5! 19.♘a3 (19.c4 a4! 20.bxa4 dxc4 21.♘c3 f5±) 19...a4 20.b4 ♚e7± and this endgame is not so clear

anymore!

19. ♖a5 a6 20. ♗a3!

The shortest route to the b4 square!

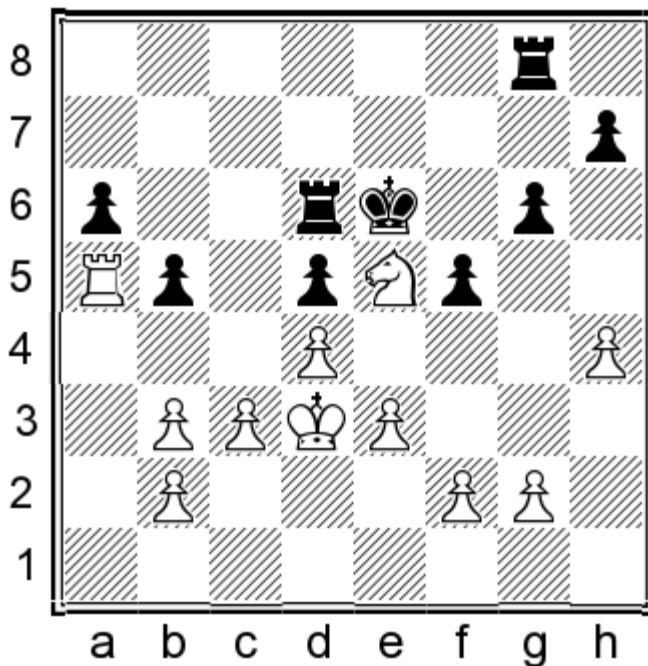
20... f5 21. ♗c2 ♞e6

Only by bringing his rook to d6 can Black defend the pawns. Black loses another pawn after 21... f4 22. ♗b4 fxe3 23. fxe3±

22. ♗b4 ♞d6 23. h4!

Taking space is always good: White doesn't have to hurry.

23... ♕f7 24. ♗d3 ♕e6 25. ♗e5 ♞g8?! 26. ♕d3?!



White is still playing this position in a 'relaxed' manner and misses a win. Now was the right moment for taking action with 26. c4! bxc4 27. bxc4 ♞a8 28. c5 ♞dd8 29. b4 ♞db8 30. ♗d3+—

26... ♕e7 27. ♞a1 ♞f6 28. g3 h5?!

Black decides to close the position on the kingside but he makes a route for the White king.

29. ♕e2! ♞d6 30. ♕f3 ♕f6 31. ♕f4

White's pieces stand well and now it is only left for him to prepare e4!

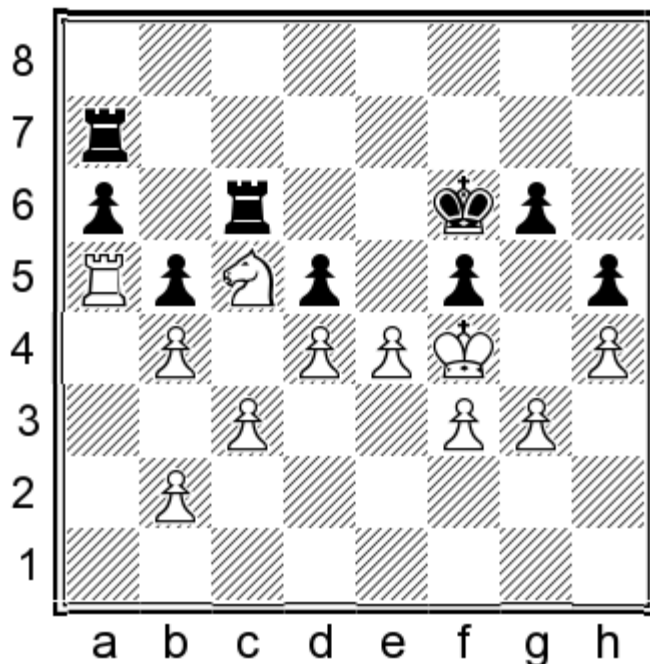
31... ♞g7 32. ♗d3 ♞a7 33. b4

Fixing the pawn on a6 and preventing possible counterplay with ...a5!

33... ♞e6 34. ♗c5 ♞d6 35. ♞a5 ♞c6 36. ♞a1 ♞d6 37. ♞a3 ♞c6 38. ♞a5

Over the last few moves White was probably waiting for the 40th move in order to get more time and find a winning plan.

**38...♖b6 39.f3 ♜c6 40.e4+-**



After a long search for the correct plan, White finally opens the position in the center and goes on to realize his big advantage.

**40...fxe4 41.fxe4 dxe4 42.d5 ♜c8 43.♔xe4?!**

A white pawn could arrive on the 7th rank after 43.d6 e3 44.d7 ♜d8 45.♔xe3 ♔e7 46.♖a1+-

**43...♞e7+ 44.♔f4 ♞e1**

Black decides to give up the a-pawn and finally activate a rook!

**45.♞xa6+ ♔g7 46.♞a7+ ♔h6**

Threatening mate in one with ♞f8. If 46...♔f6 47.♔e4+-

**47.♔e6 ♞c4+ 48.♔f3 ♞ce4**

Black has activated his rooks but it's too late.

**49.♔f4**

White still need to be careful! 49.♔g5?? leads to a draw! 49...♖1e3+ 50.♔g2 ♞e2+ 51.♔h3 ♞h2+ 52.♔xh2 ♞e2+ 53.♔h3 ♞h2+ 54.♔xh2 stalemate

**49...♞e8 50.♔e6 ♞e5 51.♞d7 ♞e1 52.b3 ♞a8 53.♞d8**

Simplification is very often the best way. Again playing for mate leads to the stalemate! 53.♔g5?? ♞f8+ 54.♔g2 ♞e2+ 55.♔h3 ♞h2+! 56.♔xh2 ♞f2+ 57.♔g1 ♞f1±

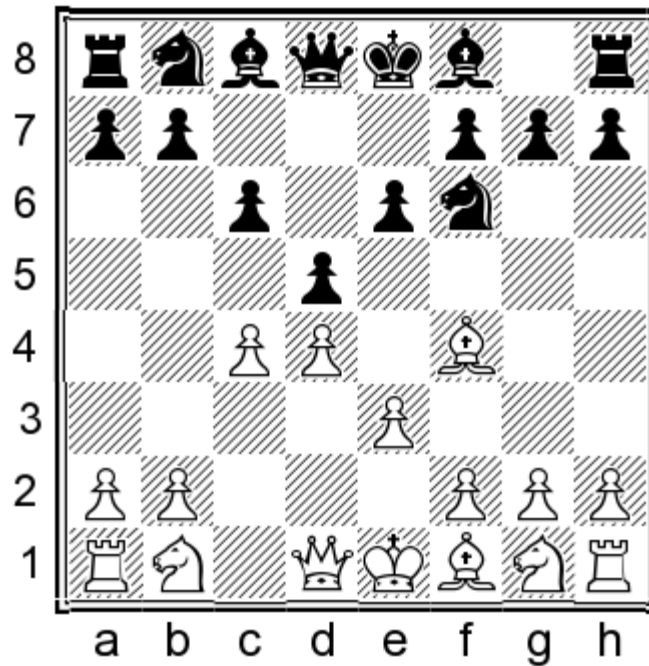


# CHAPTER EIGHT

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT SET-UP

In this chapter we will actually see one side-line from the Queen's Gambit not so often used by Black. Here Black makes a "triangle" with pawns c6-d5-e6 which reminds us a lot of the set-up from the Semi-Slav.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.c4 e6



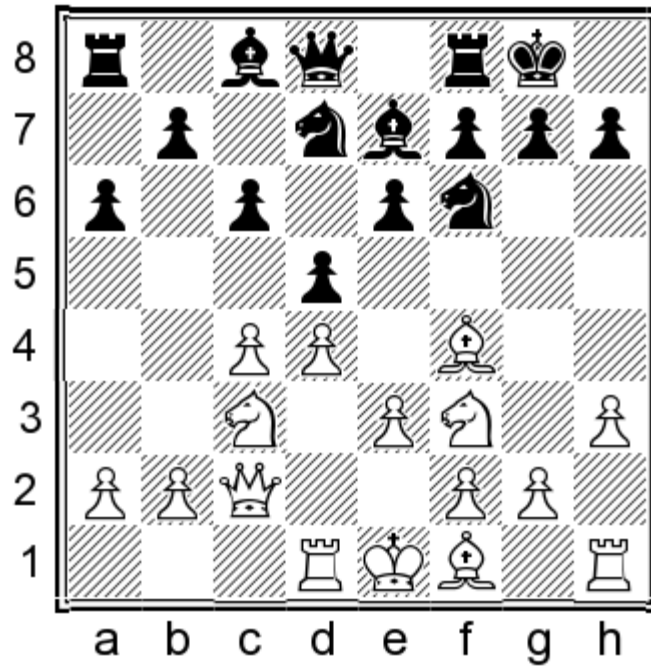
Only from this move order may there arise the rare line from the Queen's Gambit. In my rich career in the "London System" I still have not faced this plan. This line is dubious for Black due to the pawn on c6. Usually in the Queen's Gambit with ♘f4, Black's main idea is to play ...c5 at once. For example: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f4 ♘e7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e3 c5! or the more modern 6...♘bd7! also with the ...c5 idea.

5.♘c3

Here Black has two plans which will be shown in this chapter. The 1st:

5...♘d6

trying to simplify the position by exchanging the bishops. And the other is 5...♘e7 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♗c2 ♘bd7 8.h3 a6 in Meran spirit. Black is preparing ...dxc4 with a subsequent ...b5, ...c5 plan but first he waits for ♘e2 or ♘d3 to win a tempo. 9.♗d1!



This is also a useful and waiting move. White wants to take on c4 at once from f1. See Kramnik V.-Lputian S. EU ch-T 1992.

### 6. ♖g3!

See Gurevich M. -Erwich M. BEL ch Team 2008.

**M. Gurevich (2631) — M. Erwich (2416)**  
 BEL-chT 0809 Belgium (5.2), 07.12.2008

In this game we will see the rare line in the Queen's Gambit with an early c6 which is considered dubious for Black. With 5...♙d6?! Black already entered a very tough position to play, mainly because he has big problems finishing his development on the queenside. At some point, with the most aggressive approach combining e4 and long castling, White seized the initiative which resulted in a mating attack at the end.

### 1.d4 ♘f6

Our move order is 1...d5 2.♙f4 c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.c4 e6 5.♘c3 ♙d6

### 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♙f4 c6 5.e3 ♙d6?!

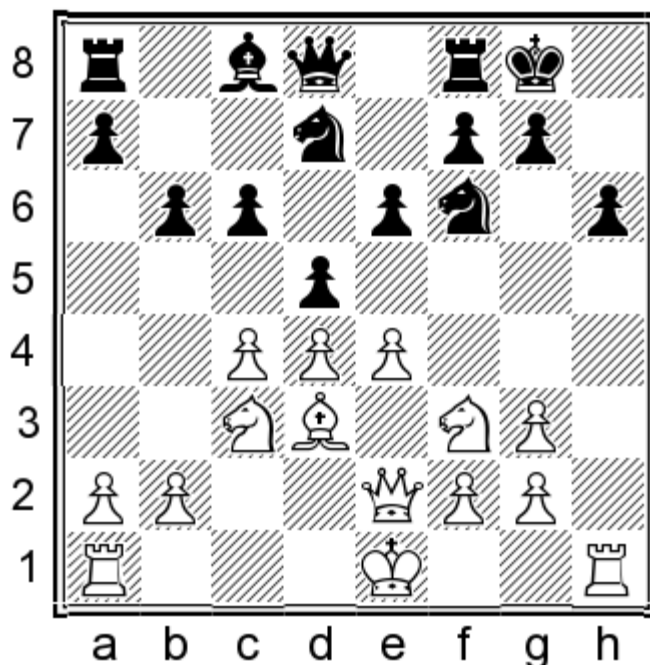


is the need to play ...♖bd7. Simplifications with 8...♙a6 9.♚e2 ♗xc4 10.♗xc4 dxc4 11.♚xc4± do not solve all Black's problems but was nevertheless necessary. The white-squared bishop will be a very important factor in White's attack.

### 9.hxg3 h6 10.♚e2 ♗bd7?!

Black doesn't feel the danger and continues with thematic play. He avoids the worst of the troubles after 10...♙a6! 11.♗e5 ♗fd7 (11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♗xc4 13.♚xc4 b5 14.♚e2 ♗fd7 15.♗d3±; 11...c5 12.cxd5 ♗xd3 13.♚xd3 exd5 14.g4→) 12.cxd5 ♗xd3 13.♗xd3 exd5 (13...cxd5 14.g4 ♗c6 15.f4 f6 16.0-0-0) 14.b4 ♗f6 15.0-0±

### 11.e4!↑



With this typical opening of the position in the center White grabs the initiative.

### 11...dxe4

In the spirit of the Meran would be 11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 b5 13.♗d3 e5!? 14.dxe5 ♗g4 15.e6! fxe6 16.♖d1! (After 16.0-0-0 ♚b6 White has to worry about the f2 pawn.) 16...♚c7 17.♗c2± but it's not a great version for Black as White has a much better structure.

### 12.♗xe4 ♚e7

12...♗b7 13.♗d6 ♚c7 14.♗xb7 ♚xb7 15.0-0-0 c5 (15...b5 16.c5 ♖fd8 17.♖h4± and g4 is coming.) 16.g4! cxd4 (16...♗xg4 17.♗e4+-) 17.g5 hxg5 18.♗xg5→

### 13.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 14.♗e5 ♗b7 15.0-0-0±

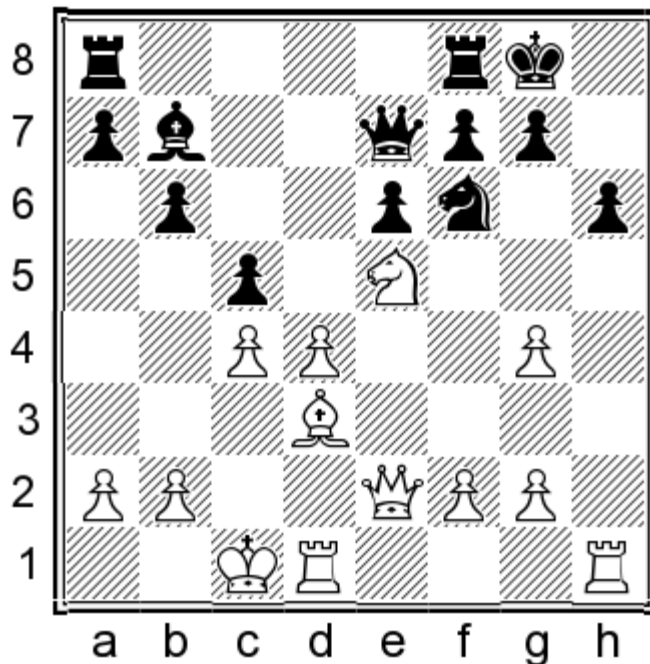
Black is powerless to oppose the g4 plan.

### 15...c5

Black could avoid the mating attack by passing into a bad endgame, e.g. 15...♖fd8 16.g4 ♗d7 (16...♖xd4 17.g5! hxg5 18.♗h7+ ♗xh7 19.♖xd4+-) 17.♚e3! (17.♚e4?! ♗f8 18.♗xc6 ♗xc6 19.♚xc6 ♚g5+ 20.♔b1 ♚xg4 21.♚e4 ♚xe4

22. ♕xe4±) 17... ♖xe5 18.dxe5 ♔g5 (18...c5 19. ♖xh6! gxh6 20. ♗xh6 ♖xd3 21. ♖h1+–) 19. ♗xg5 hxg5 20. ♕e4±

### 16.g4!



### 16... ♖fd8

Losing quickly is 16...cxd4 17.g5 hxg5 18. ♕h7+! ♖h8 (18... ♖xh7 19. ♖xh7! ♖xh7 20. ♖h1+ ♖g8 21. ♗h5+–) 19. ♕g6+ ♖g8 20. ♕xf7+! ♖xf7 21. ♖g6+–

### 17.g5!

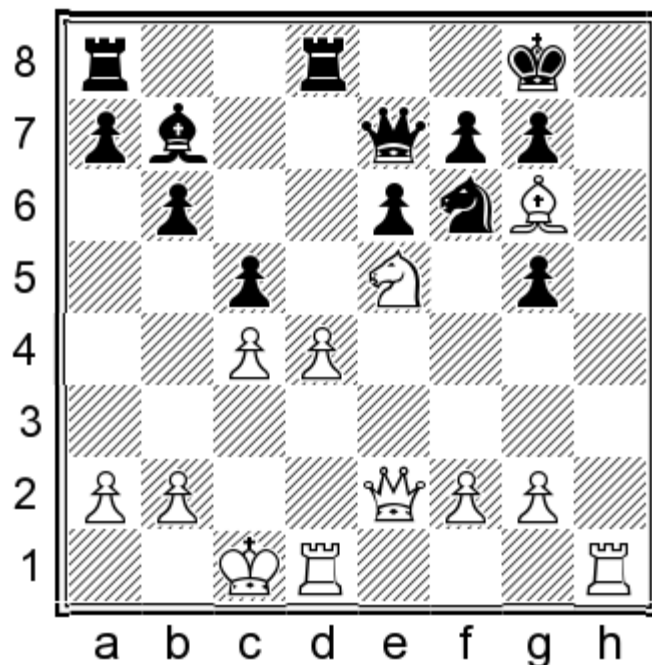
Opening the h-file is more important than one pawn!

### 17...hxg5?+–

After this move the game is actually over! The last hope was 17... ♖d7 18.gxh6 ♗g5+ 19. ♖c2 ♖xe5 20. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 (20...gxh6 21. ♗xg5+ hxg5 22.dxc5 bxc5 23. ♖h5±) 21.dxe5 gxh6 22. ♖xh6±

### 18.d5

White had a more attractive win with 18. ♕g6!



18...fxg6 19.♖h8+ ♔xh8 20.♟xg6+ ♔g8 21.♞xe7+ ♔f7 22.♞e1 ♕e4 23.♞c6 ♕xc6 24.♚xe6+ ♔g6 25.♚xc6+—

**18...g6**

18...exd5 19.♞g6!+—

**19.♚e3 ♞d7 20.♞g4 f5 21.d6 ♚g7 22.♚xe6+ ♔f8 23.♕xf5**

**1-0**

### Lessons to be learned:

1. In this rare line of the Queen's Gambit after 5...♕d6, again the best reaction is ♕g3! It forces Black at some point to take on g3, otherwise he can't finish developing his queenside.
2. After the opening of the h-file, use that in the most active way by long castling and opening the position in the center with e4.

### V. Kramnik (2590) — S. G. Lputian (2560)

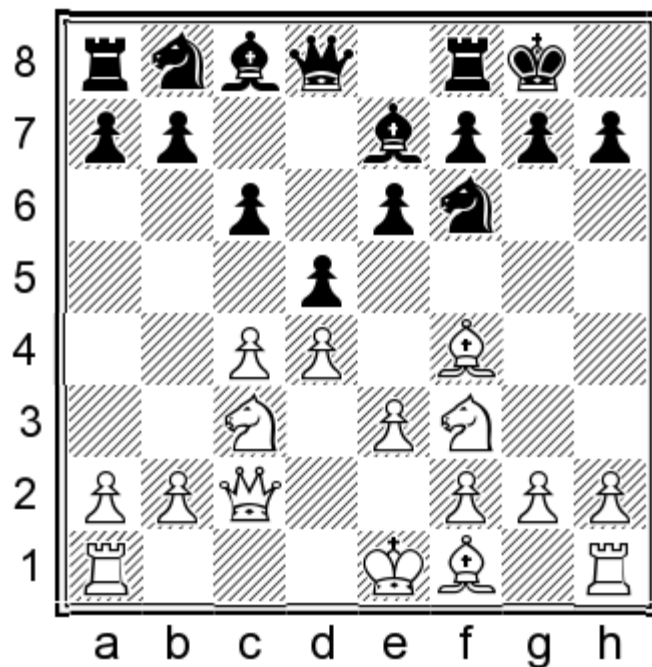
EU-chT (Men) 10th Debrecen (6.3), 11.1992

Compared to the previous game, here the Armenian grandmaster used another plan with the most logical ...♕e7 instead of ...♕d6. The ex-World Champion reacted in the best way by delaying the development of his bishop from f1 — waiting for the move dxc4. At one point Black had spent all his useful moves and he took on c4 at the worst moment, resulting in a rapid collapse.

**1.d4 e6**

Our move order is 1...d5 2.♕f4 c6 3.e3 ♞f6 4.c4 e6 5.♞c3 ♕e7 6.♞f3 0-0 7.♚c2

**2.c4 ♞f6 3.♞f3 d5 4.♞c3 ♕e7 5.♕f4 0-0 6.e3 c6 7.♚c2**



Finally we arrive at our position after a different move order!

**7...♖bd7**

It's too early for the typical 7...♖h5?! 8.♔d3! f5 (8...h6? weakening his king position would be fatal for Black after 9.♕e5 ♖d7 10.g4! ♖hf6 11.g5 hxg5 12.♖xg5 ♖xe5 13.dxe5 ♖g4 14.♕h7+ ♖h8 15.♕g8! f5 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.♖f7+ ♜xf7 18.♕xf7+-; 8...♖xf4 9.♕xh7+! ♖h8 10.exf4 g6 11.♕xg6 fxg6 12.♜xg6→; 8...g6 9.♕h6 ♜e8 10.0-0±) 9.♕e5 ♖d7 10.h3 ♖xe5 11.dxe5±

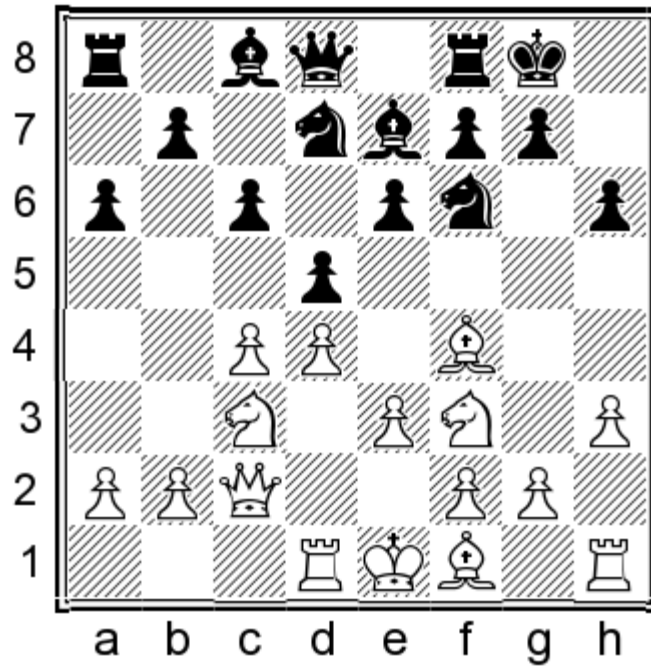
**8.h3**

Now White doesn't allow the possibility of ...♖h5!

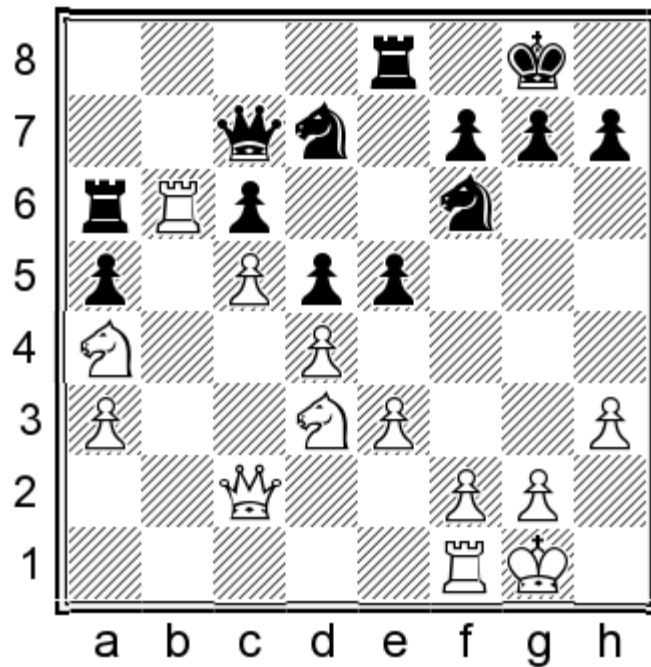
**8...a6 9.♞d1**

The best position for the rook after the opening of the position in the center.

**9...h6?!**



Black is still waiting but this move will turn to be a huge weakening. 9...b5 10.c5! a5 11.♙d3 b4 12.♘a4 ♙a6 13.♙xa6 ♖xa6 14.0-0 ♚c8 15.♗e1! ♙d8 16.♗d3 ♙c7 17.a3 bxa3 18.bxa3 ♖e8 19.♙xc7 ♚xc7 20.♖b1 e5 21.♖b6!±



Kramnik V. -Zude A. Bundesliga 1994.

9...dxc4 10.♙xc4 b5 11.♙d3 ♙b7 12.♗e5!± and it's very hard for Black to play ...c5 without some material losses. For example 12...c5 (12...h6 13.0-0 c5 14.dxc5 ♙xc5 15.♙h7+ ♖h8 16.♗e4+-) 13.dxc5 ♙xc5 14.♗xd7 ♗xd7 15.♙xh7+-

9...♚a5 10.♗d2 b5 (10...c5 11.♙e2 cxd4 12.exd4 ♗b8 13.c5 ♗c6 14.♗b3 ♚d8 15.♗a4±) 11.c5 b4 12.♗b3 ♚d8 13.♗a4± Belov,I (2430)-Kluth,C (2190) Hamburg 1995

**10.a3!**

A very useful move with a hidden idea; after a few moves the idea will be seen!

**10...dxc4**

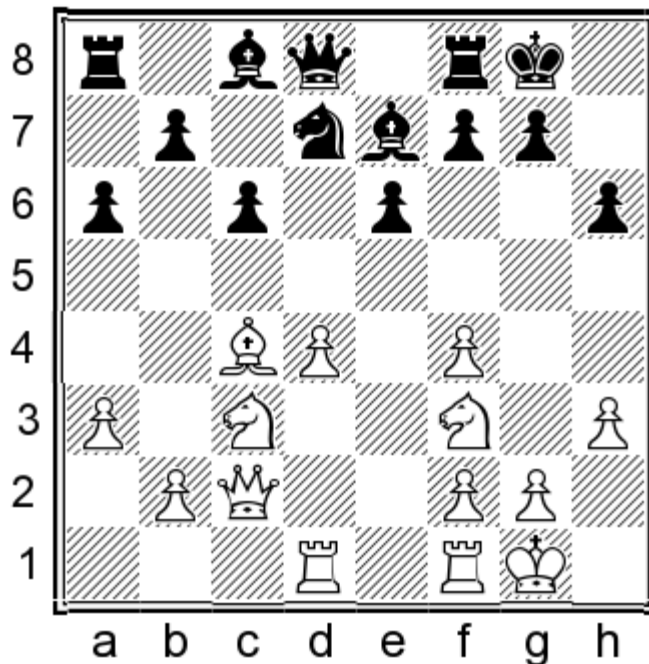
Blacks has spent all his useful waiting moves and almost at the worst moment he is forced to react in the center.

**11.♔xc4 ♖d5**

11...b5 12.♔a2 a5 13.♗e5 ♜b6 14.♔b1 ♜d8 15.♗xd7 ♜xd7 16.♗e4 ♔b7 17.0-0 ♗xe4 18.♜xe4± Mirzoev,A (2523)-Bhat,V (2409) Balaguer 2006

**12.0-0! ♗xf4 13.exf4±**

This is the old method of treating this position which was used in the past by Alekhin.



White gives up the bishop but he has achieved full control of the e5 square, and also an open e file, in return. The pawn on f4 may also actively participate in the attack with f5 sometimes. Black's position wouldn't be so bad, were it not for his pawn having moved from h7 to h6. A defensive plan with ...g6 never will work because of sacrifices on g6 or e6. Now White has the simple plan of ♔a2-♔b1 with a huge attack.

**13...♜c7 14.♗e5 ♗f6**

14...♗xe5 15.fxe5 b6 (15...b5 16.♔a2 c5 17.d5! ♜xe5 18.♜fe1±) 16.♔a2 g6 17.♜fe1 ♖g7 18.♜e3 ♔b7 19.♜g3± with the threat of ♔e6

**15.♔a2!**

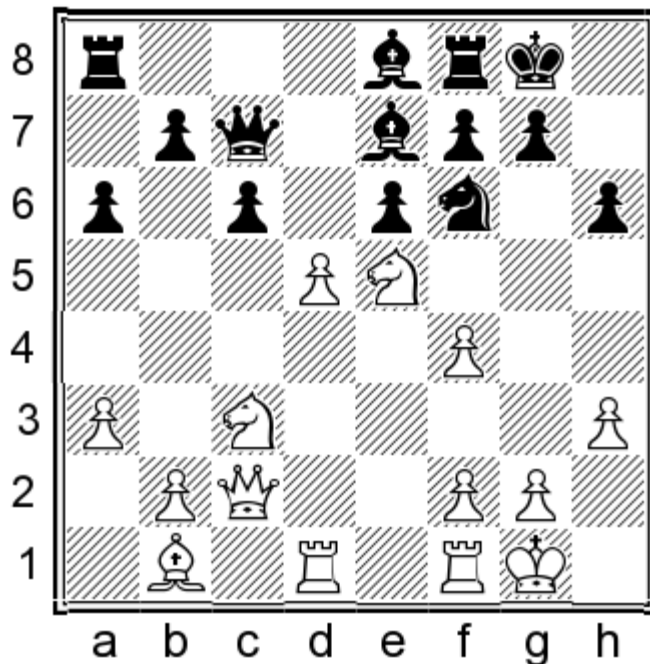
Now we can see the point of 10.a3!

**15...♔d7 16.♔b1 ♔e8?!**

Losing quickly, but in a position in which you have no good options it's very hard to criticize. 16...♜fd8 17.g4!+-; 16...♖h8 17.♗e4 g6 (17...♗xe4 18.♜xe4 f5 19.♗g6+-) 18.♗xf6 ♔xf6 19.♗xg6+ fxg6 20.♜xg6 ♔e8 21.♜xh6+ ♖g8

22.♖d3 ♜f7 23.♖g3+ ♔g7 24.♚xe6±

17.d5!+-



A typical break in such positions with an isolated pawn, after which Black's position collapses.

17...♖d8

17...cxd5 18.♗xd5 ♚xc2 19.♗xe7+ ♔h8 20.♕xc2+-;

17...exd5 18.♗xd5+-

18.♖fe1!

Still Black doesn't have a threat and White can increase the pressure even more.

18...♔h8

The idea is to remove the king from checks and now Black threatens to take on d5! 18...cxd5 19.♗xd5+-;

18...exd5 19.♗xd5 ♖xd5 20.♖xd5+-

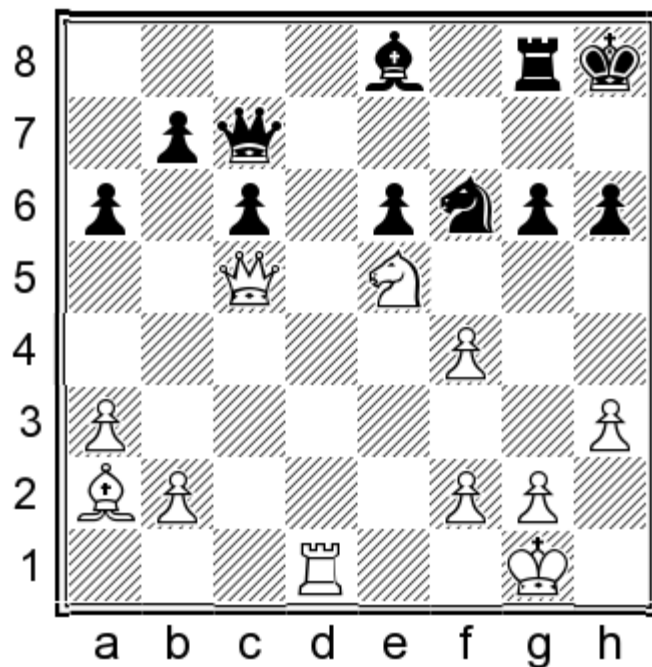
19.dxe6 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 fxe6

White didn't land checkmate, but he has reached a strategically winning position. Black is full of weaknesses!

21.♗e4 g6 22.♗c5

Now the dark squares will be also be problematic for Black.

22...♕xc5 23.♚xc5 ♖g8 24.♕a2



After a successful campaign, the bishop moves to another diagonal.

24...♔g7

24...♗f7 25.♕d6+-

25.♗xe6 ♜f8 26.♘d7

Black has no defence against the upcoming ♕e7.

1-0

### Conclusion:

If Black makes the “triangle” with his pawns e6-d5-c6 as in the Semi-Slav, his idea is usually to take on c4 with ...b5 next. Because of that, don’t hurry with the move ♗d3 — it loses time. Play some other useful moves and recapture on c4 in one move. In the game a “young” Vladimir Kramnik cast doubts on the Black set-up with very clever and useful moves in the opening like h3 (preserving the f4-bishop), and ♜d1, which was played against the further ...c5 after ...dxc4, ...b5 plan. Also a3 provided a nice retreat for the bishop, enabling him to utilise the diagonal b1-h7.

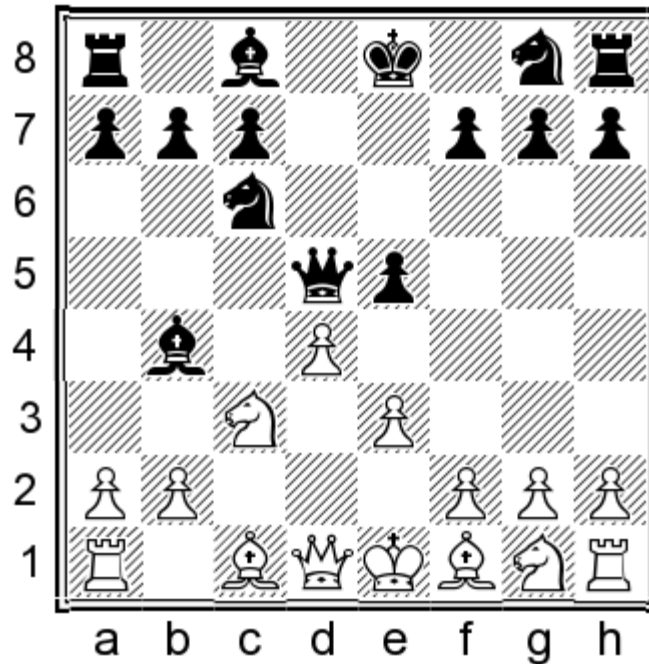
## CHAPTER NINE

### CHIGORIN SET-UP AND 2...♘g4

The Chigorin set-up is very rarely played against the London System. In my opinion the reason is the impossibility for Black to play actively in the center with ...e5 as in the Chigorin proper, and so the knight on c6 stands awkwardly.

#### 1.d4 d5 2.♘f4

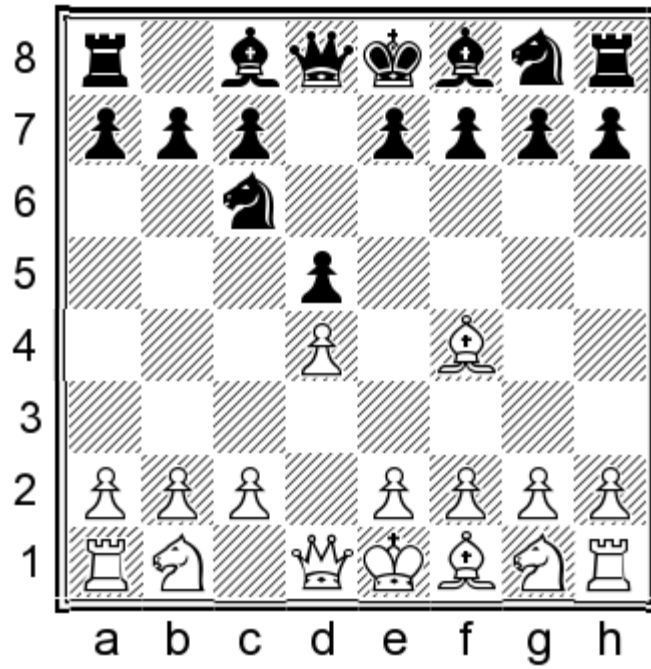
2...♘c6 3.cxd5 ♙xd5 4.e3 e5 5.♗c3 ♘b4



This is the main position in the Chigorin Defense. Here Black has the rapid development, but it's not a guarantee of equalizing because White takes the bishop pair and builds up his center. The theory is going like this: 6.♘d2 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 (or 7.♘xc3 exd4 8.♗e2)

A lot of players have in their repertoire against the Chigorin 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♘f4 with the idea being to play against the knight on c6. The move c4 appears later when Black cannot react actively in the center (or 3.e3 with the same idea)

#### 2...♘c6

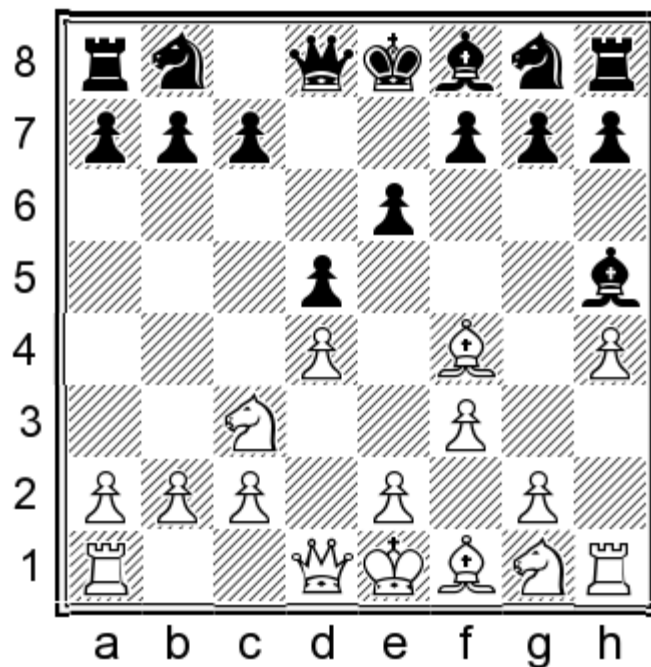


2...g4 This move has been used several times by Ivan Sokolov! The main idea of this move — in the spirit of the Trompowsky — is to prevent the e3 move and making the London set-up! From the existing games in the database it is not so clear how White should react. After many years of experience in these positions, my conclusion is that the only way to fight for the initiative is with 3.♘c3! -the idea being to play like in the Veresov Attack in which the bishop on g4 is exposed. White will play f3 with tempo.

Usually in the Veresov Black develops his bishop to f5. 3...e6

a) 3...c5 4.h3 ♗h5 5.g4 ♗g6 6.e4! dxe4 7.♗b5+ ♘d7 8.dxc5±;

b) 3...♘c6 4.f3 ♗h5 (4...e5?! 5.dxe5 ♗e6 6.e3± and I don't see sufficient compensation for the pawn!) 5.e4±; 4.f3 ♗h5 5.h4!



This is the point!

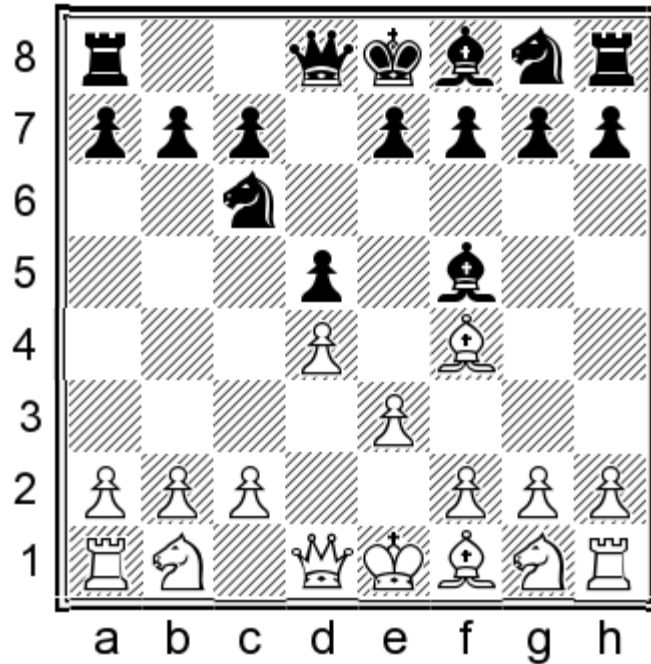
(Thematic would be 5.g4 ♖g6 6.h4 h5↗)

5...h6

(5...♖e7 6.♚d2 ♖xh4+ 7.g3+-)

6.g4 ♖g6 7.♚d2 ♘f6 8.0-0-0↑ and White has a nice attacking position!

**3.e3 ♖f5**

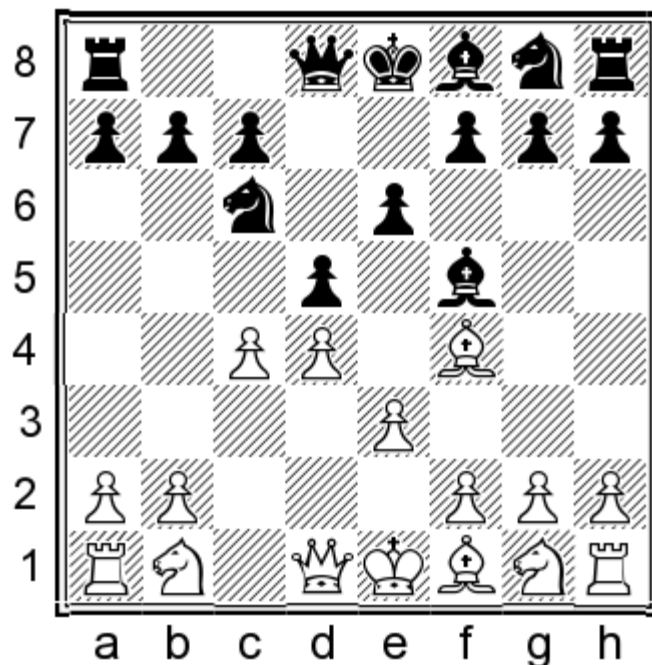


In this position Black has also tried another plan 3...♘f6 4.♘f3 ♖g4?! 5.h3! ♖xf3 (5...♖h5 6.♖b5!↑ with the unpleasant g4-♗e5) 6.♚xf3 e6 — see Rozentalis,E (2551)-Zeberski, J (2437) Ustron 2007.

**4.c4!**

White doesn't have to be afraid of complications!

**4...e6**



Apparently the active 4...♙xb1? is not dangerous for White. 5.♖xb1 e5 6.dxe5 ♗b4+ 7.♔e2 dxc4 8.♗c2± and White's king is safe in the center. The plan is ♖d1-♜f3-g3-♙h3 or ♙g2 Kovacevic,S (2396)-Morales Camacho,J (2193) Lorca 2004;

Also, 4...e5 doesn't work 5.♙xe5! ♙xb1 (5...♜b4 6.♜a3±; 5...♙b4+ 6.♜c3 ♜xe5 7.dxe5 ♙xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♜e7 9.♜f3 0-0 10.♗b3±) 6.♖xb1 ♙b4+ 7.♔e2 ♜xe5 8.dxe5 dxc4 9.g3 c6 10.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 11.♜f3 ♜e7 12.♙g2 0-0 13.♖hc1 b5 14.♜d4±

### 5.♜c3 ♜f6 6.♜f3 ♙e7

Black also has other possibilities in this position: 6...♙b4 7.♖c1 ♜e4 8.cxd5! exd5 9.♙d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8 (10...♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♜a5 12.♜g5!?)±) 11.♜b5! ♙a5 12.♜e5 ♜xe5 13.♙xe5 c6 14.♙xe4 ♙xe4 15.♜d6 f6 16.♜xb7 ♗b6 17.♜xa5 ♗xa5 18.♙d6 ♗xa2 19.♙a3± Galyas,M (2444) -Kaufman,R (2319) Budapest 2007;

6...♙d6 7.♙g5! ♙e7 8.♖c1±;

6...♜b4!?! 7.♖c1 dxc4 8.♙xc4 c6 9.0-0 ♜bd5 10.♙e5 ♙e7 (10...♜xc3 11.♖xc3 (11.bxc3!?! ♙a3 12.♖a1 ♙b2 13.♖b1 ♙xb1 14.♗xb1 ♙xc3 15.♗xb7 0-0 16.♜g5 ♗b6 17.♖b1 ♗xb7 18.♖xb7 with the very unpleasant threat of ♜f7.) 11...♙d6 12.♗b3 ♖b8 13.♙xd6 ♗xd6 14.♙d3 ♙xd3 15.♖xd3 0-0 16.♖c1±) 11.♗e2 0-0 12.h3 ♙g6 13.♖fd1± Xu, J (2668)-Miladinovic,I (2563) Istanbul 2000

### 7.a3!?

A useful prophylactic move which prevents ...♜b4 ideas! See Van Wely-Sokolov I. Kasparov Chess GP 2000.

### E. Rozentalis (2551) — J. Zeberski (2437)

POL-chT Ustron (6), 06.09.2007

In this game Black played the Chigorin set-up, where Black chose a dubious plan with ...♙g4 after which he was forced to give up the bishop pair. White used his pluses in the position with the energetic plan h4 connected with long castling and playing for the attack, after which Black encountered problems at an early stage of the game, from which he was unable to escape.

### 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3

Our move order is 2.♘f4 ♘c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♘g4?! 5.h3

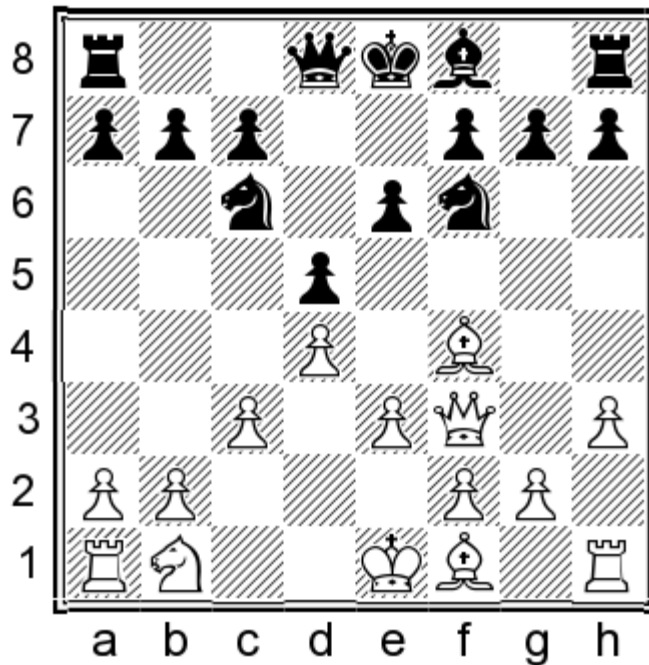
### 2...♘c6 3.♘f4 ♘g4 4.e3 ♘f6 5.h3!

An important move which forces Black to hand over the bishop pair!

### 5...♘xf3

Black was more-or-less forced into this! 5...♘h5 6.g4 ♘g6 7.♘b5 e6 8.♘e5↑

### 6.♙xf3 e6 7.c3!



In this type of position the usual plan for White is to play c4, but here with the queen on f3 that isn't a good option because Black has ...♘b4. To prepare the plan with ♙d1 and a3 is too slow, and Black can react with ...♘d6 followed by ...e5 after which he solves all his problems. With the move in the game 7.c3! White decides to play more in the 'London spirit', choosing a normal set-up with ♘d2-♘d3 concentrating the power on the kingside and supported by the active queen on f3!

### 7...♘d6 8.♘g5

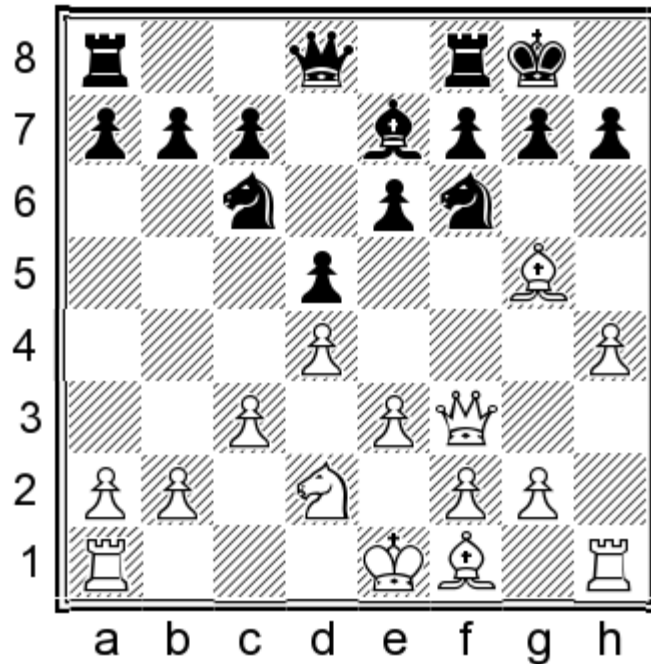
A logical decision to avoid giving up the bishop pair for nothing!

### 8...♘e7

A very passive move which loses time! The best for Black was to go in for the slightly worse endgame after 8...h6 9.♘xf6! the best decision is to play on the better structure (Black would have a comfortable position after 9.♘h4 g5! 10.♘g3 ♘g3 11.♙xg3 ♘e4 12.♙f3 ♙d6 13.♘d3 f5 14.♙h5+ ♔d7∞) 9...♙xf6 10.♙xf6 gxf6 11.g3± with a better structure and the possibility to play c4 taking a space advantage on the queenside, and guaranteeing White a small advantage, with no risk. Now Black has to improve his "bad knight" with 11...♘e7 12.c4 c6 (12...c5 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘g2± the bishop on g2 is a beast! 15... ♘b4?! 16.♔e2 ♘c2 17.♙c1 ♘xa1 18.♙xc5± and the knight

on a1 will fall sooner or later.) 13.♖c3 f5 14.c5 ♔c7 15.b4 ♘g8 (15...e5 will meet always with 16.f4!±) 16.♙d3 ♘f6 17.♘e2±

9.♘d2 0-0 10.h4!↑



White doesn't play thematically and instead uses exactly the right moment to seize the initiative. This motif was already seen in the first game of CHAPTER 5. Kovacevic V.-Ree H. Maribor 1980.

10...e5

Black seeks active play in the center, but the next move brings a very strong answer! With 10...a6 Black cannot make sufficient counterplay after 11.0-0-0 e5 12.g4 b5 13.♙xf6! ♙xf6 14.g5 ♙e7 15.♙g2 e4 16.♘xe4! dxe4 17.♙xe4 ♘a5 18.♙xa8 ♙xa8 19.♙xa8 ♙xa8 20.e4±

11.♙b5!

The crucial move in White's concept. In this way, pressurising the knight on c6, Black is forced to abandon the center.

11...exd4

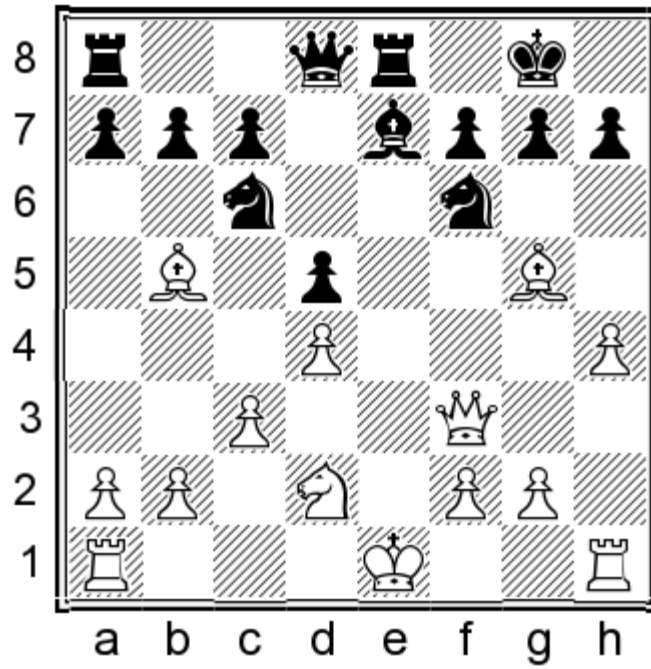
Another logical reaction is 11...e4 but it promises nothing good after 12.♙h3 a6 (12...♙c8 13.♙xc8 ♙fxc8 14.f3 exf3 15.gxf3± with a strong center and bishop pair there is no doubt about White's huge advantage!) 13.♙e2 b5 14.f3! and again Black's center crumbles. 14...exf3 15.gxf3→

12.exd4

In this symmetrical structure White has much better placed pieces and the possibility to feel free to attack the Black King.

12...♙e8?

An indifferent move which leads to even bigger problems.

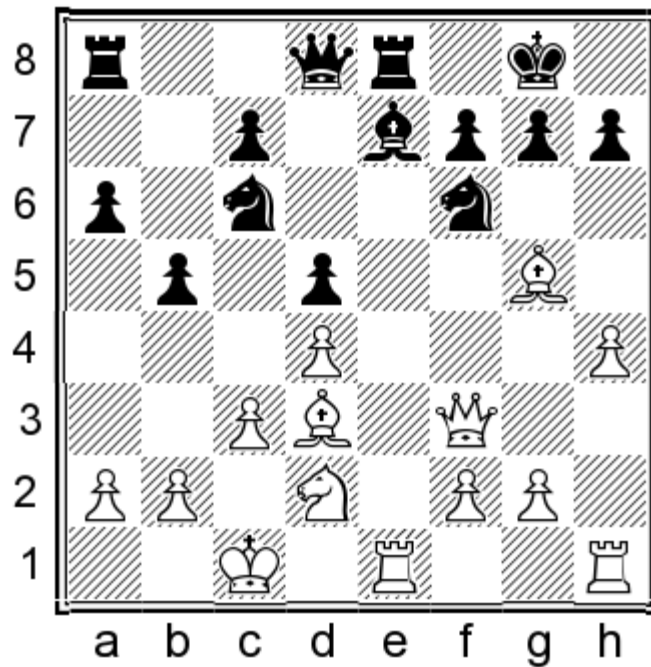


Black should search for his chances with the active 12...♘e4!? 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♚f5 h6 (14...g6 15.♚f4 ♚d6 16.♚xd6 ♙xd6 17.h5±) 15.♙d2 ♙xh4 16.0-0-0 ♙g5 17.♙xg5 ♚xg5+ 18.♚xg5 hxg5 19.♞h5 ♘e7 20.♞xg5 c6 21.♙c4 ♞fe8 22.♞e5 ♘g6 23.♞f5 ♞e7 24.♞e1±

### 13.0-0-0

Of course, Black is too slow on the queenside!

13...a6 14.♙d3 b5 15.♞de1



A very nice move with a concrete idea: to take on f6-e8 and then play ♚f5!

15...♚d6

Black must make a connection between his rooks. After 15...b4 White is winning by force! 16.♔xf6! bxc3 (16... ♔xf6 17.♖xe8+ ♜xe8 18.♞f5+-) 17.bxc3 ♔a3+ 18.♚c2 ♞xf6 19.♖xe8+ ♜xe8 20.♞xf6 gxf6 21.♔xa6+-

### 16.a3 ♚a5

Leaving the e5 square unprotected, but Black didn't have many better options. he has no time for 16...♖ab8 17.g4! a5 18.♔f4 ♞d7 19.g5 ♜g4 20.♖hg1 f5 21.gxf6 ♜xf6 22.♔h6 ♔f8 23.♖xe8 ♜xe8 24.♔g5 (24. ♞xf6? ♖e1+! 25.♖xe1 gxf6) 24...♔e7 25.h5 (25. ♔xf6? ♔xf6 26. ♞xf6 ♖e1+! 27. ♖xe1 gxf6 28. ♔xb5 ♚f8 29. ♜b3 ♞d6∞) 25...b4 26.h6 bxc3 27.bxc3 ♔xa3+ 28.♚d1+- or 16...h6 17.g4! ♞d7 18.♔f5 ♞d8 19.♔xh6! gxh6 20.g5 ♜e4 21.♜xe4 dxe4 22.♔xe4+-

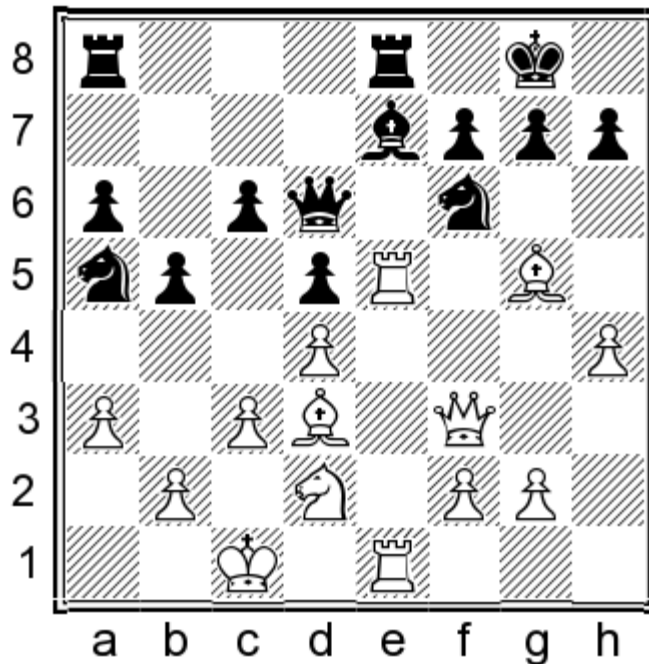
### 17.♖e5!+-

White dominates the e-file and the threat is ♔f6-♖d5.

### 17...c6

Black can't solve his problem with the d-pawn after 17...♜c4 in view of 18.♔xc4 dxc4 (18...bxc4 19. ♔xf6 ♔xf6 20.♖xd5+-) 19.♖he1 ♖ad8 (19... ♚f8 20. ♖xe7!+-) 20.♔xf6 gxf6 21.♜e4 ♞b6 22.♜xf6+! ♞xf6 23.♞xf6 ♔xf6 24.♖xe8+ ♜xe8 25.♖xe8+-

### 18.♖he1



Black loses material! The biggest problem in Black's position is the weak 8th rank and pinned rook on e8!

### 18...♚f8

In this way Black tries to solve both problems. 18...♞d7 19.♔xf6 ♔xf6 20.♞f5!+- Deflection!

### 19.♔xh7!

Unfortunately for Black, something is always hangs.

19...♖c4 20.♗xc4 bxc4 21.♙f5

White chooses the safest way! The fastest win was 21.h5 ♖ab8 22.h6 g6 23.♙xg6! fxg6 24.♖e6+—

21...♗g8 22.♙f4

Waiting for the handshake, White misses a quicker win again. 22.♙xe7+ ♖xe7 23.♖xe7 ♗xe7 24.♙e6 f6 25.♖h5+—

22...♖f6 23.g4 ♖xh4 24.♙d7

Also was good 24.♖h1 ♖f6 25.g5 ♖d6 26.♖e3 ♖d8 27.♖h8+—

24...♖ed8 25.♙xc6 ♖ac8 26.♙xd5 ♗f6 27.♖h1

Conclusion: If your opponent doesn't respect the basic principles of the opening — by giving up the bishop pair and helping to develop your pieces, don't miss the chance to punish him with energetic play. In this game, the plan with ...♙g4 cannot be recommended for Black!

1–0

**L. Van Wely (2646) — I. Sokolov (2637)**

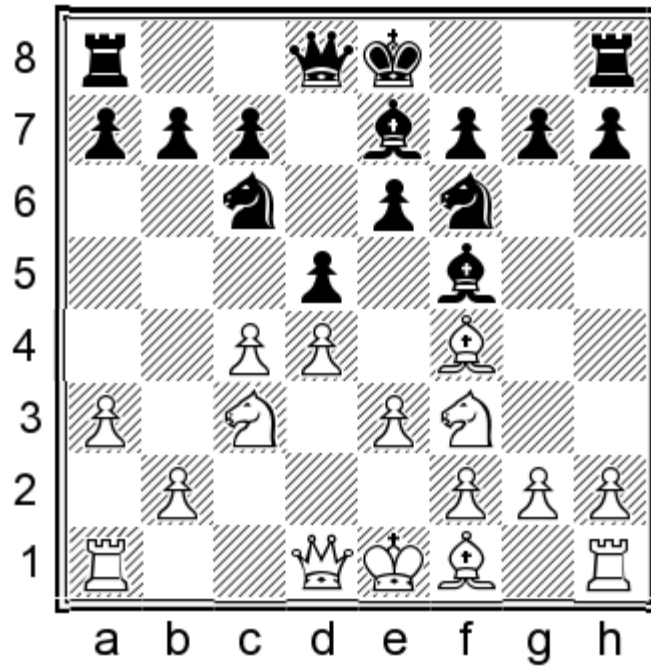
KasparovChess GP g/60 Internet (1.2), 11.02.2000

In this game there appeared once again the Chigorin set-up — but not from our move orders. In the structure characteristic of many openings, Black sought an early “fight” with 11...♗h5?! and he took the bishop on g3 too early, before White castled. White used that inaccuracy with a nice plan involving ♖e2 and using the open h-file, winning in an instructive way.

1.♗f3

Our move order is 1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 ♗c6 3.e3 ♙f5 4.c4 e6 5.♗c3 ♗f6 6.♗f3 ♙e7 7.a3

1.♗f3 d5 2.d4 ♙f5 3.c4 e6 4.♗c3 ♗c6 5.♙f4 ♗f6 6.e3 ♙e7 7.a3!?



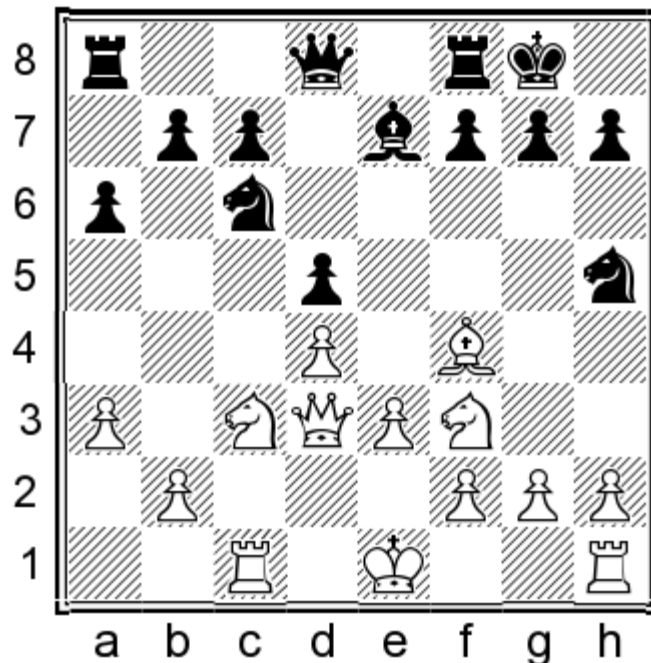
A useful prophylactic move, preventing ideas with ♖b4! White didn't want to play twice with the bishop after 7.♙e2 ♖b4 8.♞c1 dxc4 9.♙xc4 c6= or 7.cxd5 ♖xd5! 8.♙g3 (8.♖xd5?! ♙xd5 9.a3 ♙a5+! 10.♖d2 e5↑) 8...0-0 9.♙e2 ♙b4 10.♙d2 ♖f6∞

7.♞c1 is also a good move with a similar idea to 7.a3

**7...0-0 8.♞c1 a6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♙d3±**

This is the typical Queen's Gambit position with the awkward knight on c6 which causes Black difficulties.

**10...♙xd3 11.♙xd3 ♖h5?!**



This is too ambitious. Black had a very interesting option in 11...♖a7!? with the idea of improving his knight's

position and now White can fight for an advantage only in the following way: 12.h4!? c6 13.♘g5 ♚d7 14.♙e5 g6 15.f3!  
 (15.h5 ♜g4↔) 15...h6 16.♘h3 ♘b5 17.♙f2±

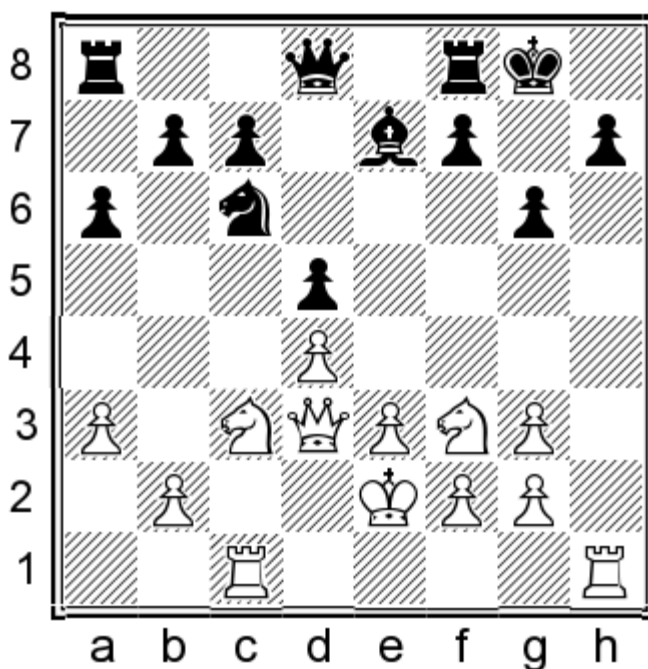
### 12.♙g3

The typical idea with 12.♙e5 doesn't promise anything big after 12...g6 13.0-0 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 c6 15.♖fd1 ♘g7

### 12...♘xg3?!

This is too early. Black should wait for White to castle and only then take on g3. In this way White will use his open h file for attacking purposes. 12...g6 13.0-0 ♘xg3 14.hxg3± and the plan is ♘a4 creating pressure on the queenside. Also, we should not exclude the possibility of e4.

### 13.hxg3 g6 14.♙e2!

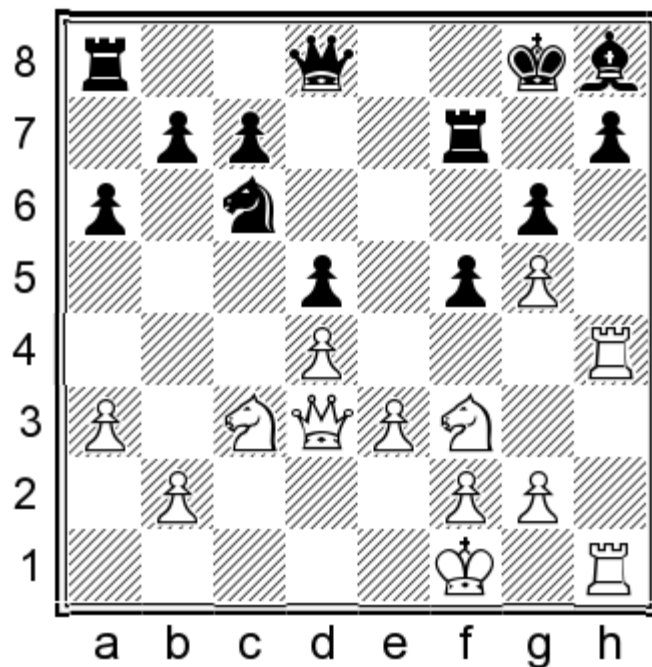


Of course, White doesn't miss the chance to attack along the open h-file!

### 14...♙f6 15.g4 ♙g7 16.g5 f5?±

Now the pawn h7 becomes a serious weakness and Black remains without counterplay. Still, it would not be terrible after 16...f6! 17.gxf6 ♜xf6 18.♙f1 ♘e7 19.e4 c6±

### 17.♖h4 ♖f7 18.♖ch1 ♙h8 19.♙f1



The king makes way for the knight transfer to the f4 square.

**19... ♖d6 20. ♗e2 ♗e7 21. ♗f4 c5**

Black has nothing to lose and starts his search for some counterplay.

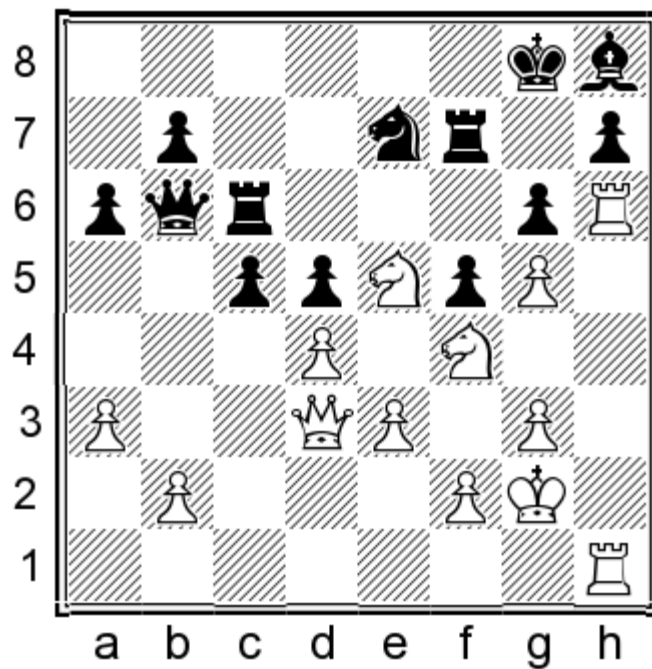
**22. g3 ♜b6 23. ♔g2 ♝c8**

23... ♜xb2 24. ♜b1 ♜a2 25. ♜xb7+-

**24. ♜h6 ♝c6?!**

In a difficult position Black blunders. Also 24...cxd4 brings no relief: 25.exd4 ♜xb2 26. ♜b1 ♜c3 27. ♜xc3 ♝xc3 28. ♜xb7+- or 24...c4 25. ♜d1 ♜xb2 26. ♜g1!+- and Black can't prevent ♜h2-♜h7

**25. ♗e5!+-**



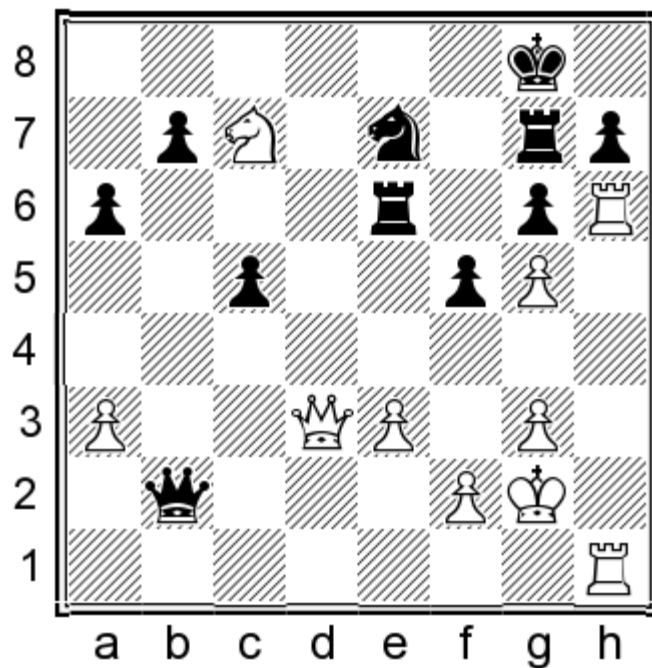
25...♔xe5 26.dxe5

Now Black loses the d5 pawn and also the game!

26...♖xb2

26...♗d8 27.♞d1+-

27.e6 ♜g7 28.♘xd5 ♞xe6 29.♘c7!



**Conclusion:**

In the Chigorin set-up against our lovely “London”, the main and permanent problem of Black is his knight on c6 and that has to be exploited with a well-prepared c4! In that way you avoid some unnecessary complications in the center after which White can count on a small but long-term advantage playing on the c-file. More about can be read in CHAPTER 9 — if you haven’t read it already!

# CHAPTER TEN

## TYPICAL ENDGAMES: LONDON SYSTEM

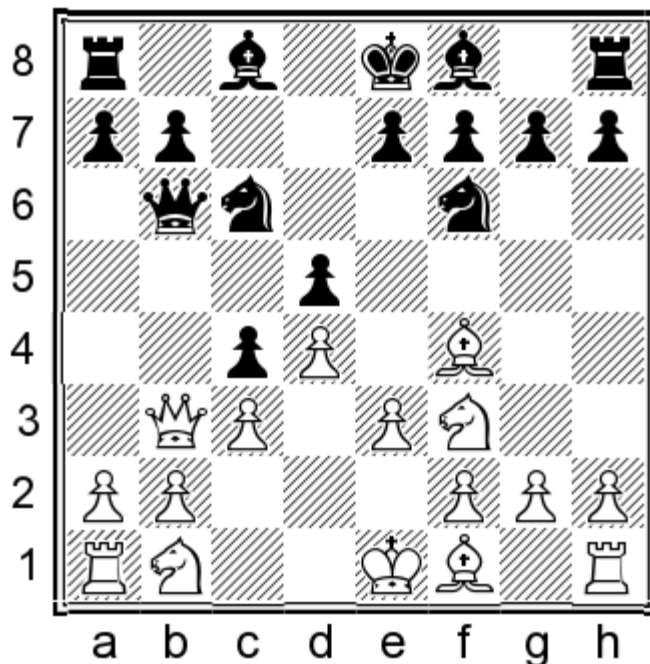
Although the main theme of this book is the opening, I decided to devote some care and attention to the endgames typical of the London System. One of the most important aspects of chess is the endgame, so it's very important to know which endgames may arise in your openings. In the London System, endgames can occur in several ways and they are in general good thanks to the healthy pawn structure. However, there are cases when you have to avoid them, and all will be explained in this chapter. Also in this chapter I could place some games from previous chapters! Pay special attention to these games: Delchev A.-Behling R. Forni di Sopra 2014. (chapter 3.) Sedlak N.-Miranovic R. Osijek 2008. (chapter 3.) Sedlak N.-Ascic P. Bosnjaci 2006. (chapter 5.) Kharlov A.-Dokutchayev A. Kazan 1995. (chapter 6.) Prie E.-Varga P. FRA ch Team 2009. (chapter 6.) Burmakin V. -Jerez Perez A. Sitges 2009. (chapter 7.)

**V. Kovacevic (2555) — Z. Ribli (2610)**

Bugojno (11), 1984

This is one of the critical games in developing the London System. The actors were two top GMs in 1980. The leader of White's pieces was one of the best team players in ex-Yugoslavia (our well-known London expert), and Black was the famous Hungarian theoretician (at the moment the successful coach and captain of the Austrian team). Black was well-prepared and he proved that the endgame which happened in the game held more prospects for Black thanks to the space advantage. This game presents a very rare case where the endgame doesn't appeal to White. We can classify this game as a chess classic.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 d5 3.♙f4 c5 4.e3 ♗c6 5.c3 ♚b6 6.♛b3 c4!



7.♛xb6?!

Not the best decision! The space advantage provides Black with a pleasant game, so White should avoid this ending! A better option was 7.♛c2 ♙f5! 8.♛c1 e6 9.♗bd2= with the idea of b3 or ♙e2-d1-c2 trying to push e4 later.

## 7...axb6

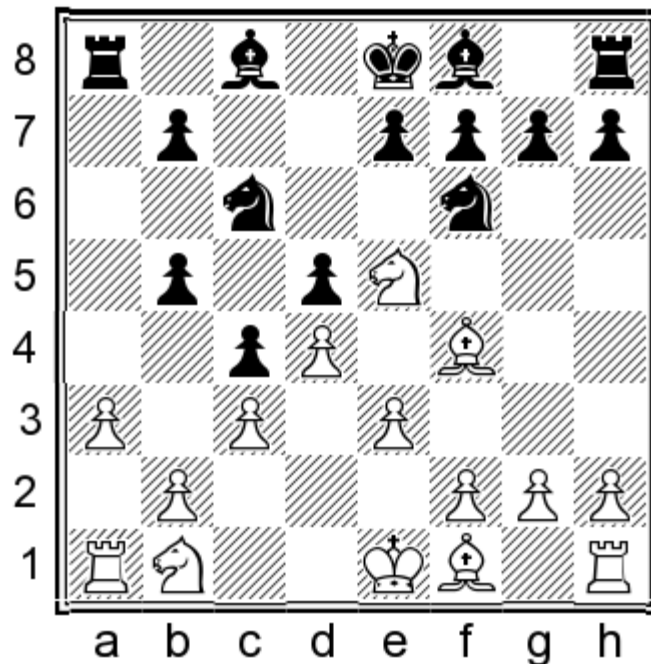
Now Black has an easy plan with ...b5-b4 freeing himself of the doubled-pawns! It's interesting to compare this position with the games Kharlov A.—Dokutchayev Kazan 1995. and Prie E.—Varga P. Fra ch Team 2009 from chapter 6. In those games White pushed c5 and forced an endgame after ...♙xb3.

## 8.a3

Another option for White is 8.♘a3 after which Black achieves a minimum of an equal position in many ways.

8...♙f5 (or 8...♞a5 9.♙c7 e6 10.♙xb6 ♞a6 11.♙c5 ♙xc5 12.dxc5 ♘e4 13.♘b5 ♔e7) 9.♘b5 ♞a5 10.a4 ♙c2

## 8...b5 9.♘e5



This move is probably played against ...b4, but it doesn't prevent it.

## 9...e6

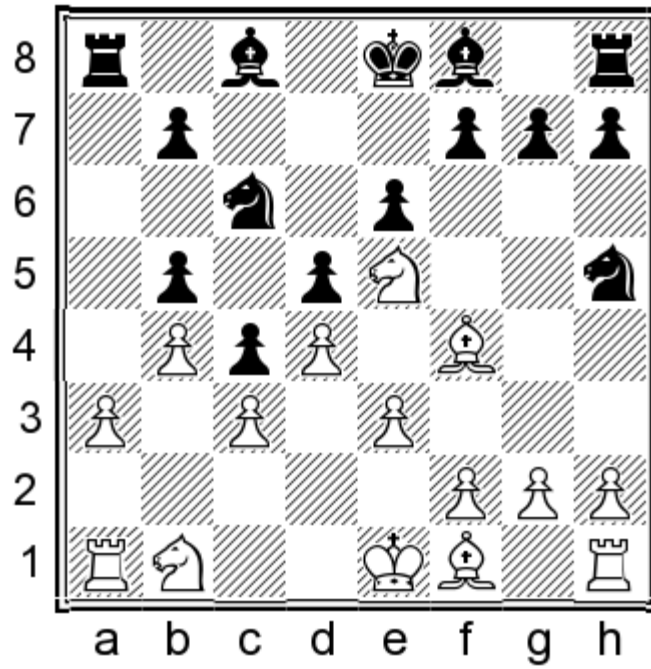
9...b4!? was also possible and after 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.cxb4 e6 Black takes back the pawn with a comfortable position!

## 10.b4?!

Understandably White doesn't allow b4 but this move creates a weakness on a3 and gives up the bishop pair, which will cost him expensively in the end. After 10.♙e2 Black equalizes with 10...b4.

## 10...♘h5!

After killing the London bishop, a future breakthrough with ...e5 is easier for Black.



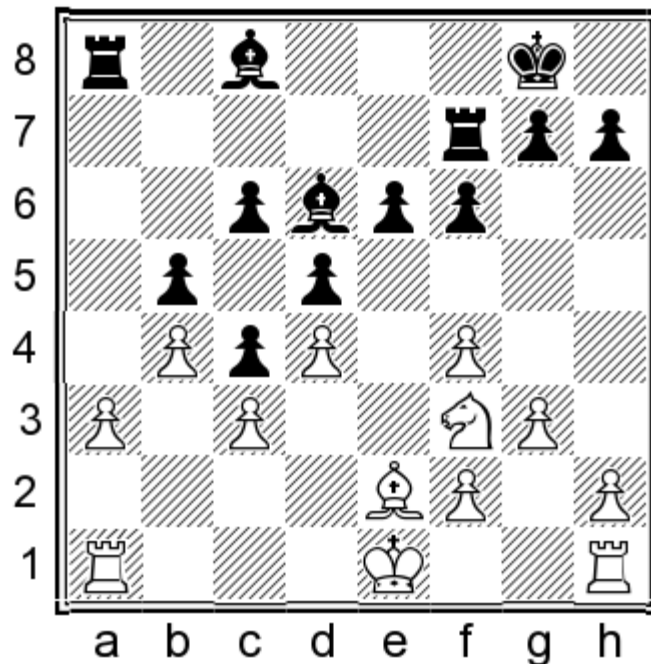
11. ♖xc6 ♜xf4!

An important intermediate move! Why miss this chance?

12. exf4 bxc6 13. ♜d2 f6!

Black takes control of the e5 square and prepares ...e5 !

14. ♜f3 ♙d6 15. g3 0-0 16. ♙e2 ♜f7!

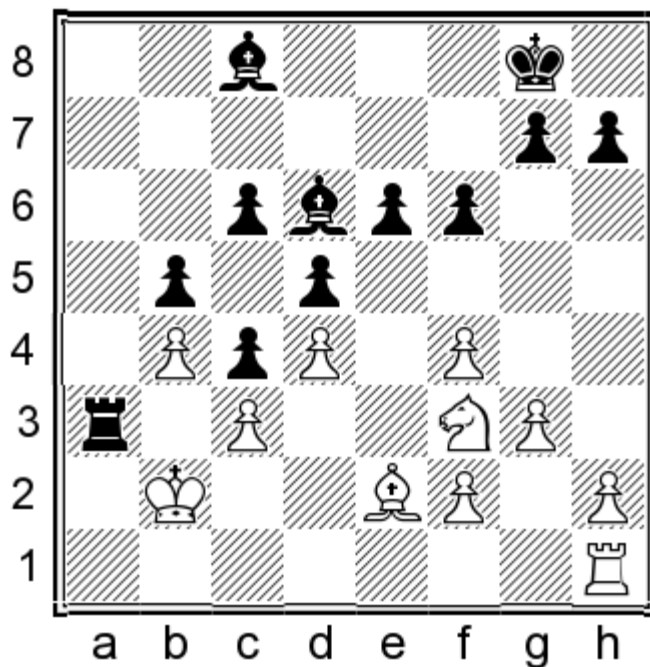


Here is one more point of 13...f6: the rook comes to the a file, pressuring the a3 pawn.

### 17.♔d2?±

White gives up a pawn! It was possible to save the pawn with 17.♕d1 ♖fa7 18.a4! bxa4 19.♞a3 ♜a6! otherwise White takes back the pawn after ♔d2-♕c2-♞ha1-♞a4! 20.♞xa4 ♜b5 21.♞xa7 ♞xa7 22.♔d2 ♞a2+ 23.♕c2± and although Black has the more active pieces and controls the a-file, it's not easy to find a way to make progress!

### 17...♞fa7 18.♔c2 ♞xa3 19.♞xa3 ♞xa3 20.♔b2



White gave up the pawn but he didn't give up the file!

### 20...♞a7 21.♞a1

White was probably hoping for a draw in view of the closed position and doubled c-pawns, but Black found a very nice plan.

### 21...♞xa1 22.♔xa1 ♜d7

The partially-forgotten bishop comes into the game via the e8 square.

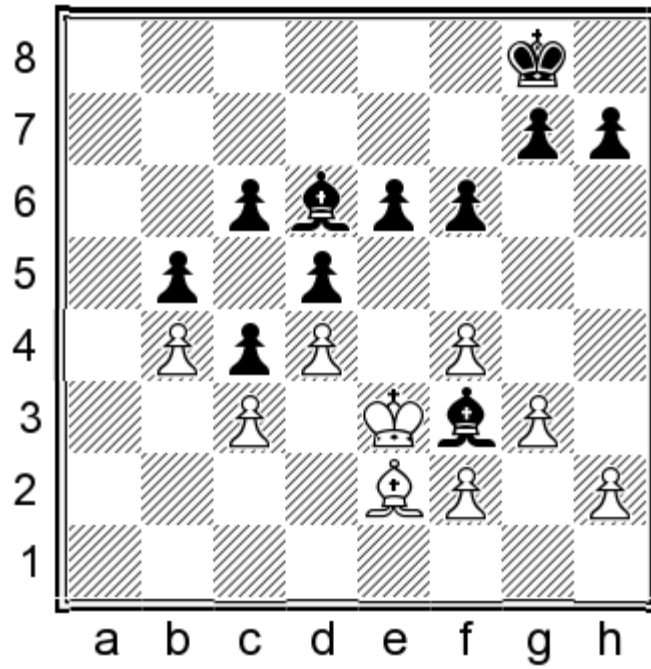
### 23.♔b2 ♜e8 24.♔c2 ♜g6+ 25.♔d2 ♜e4

With pressure on the knight, the ...e5 threat becomes more real.

### 26.♔e3

White can't move the knight, because ...e5 comes.

### 26...♜xf3!-+



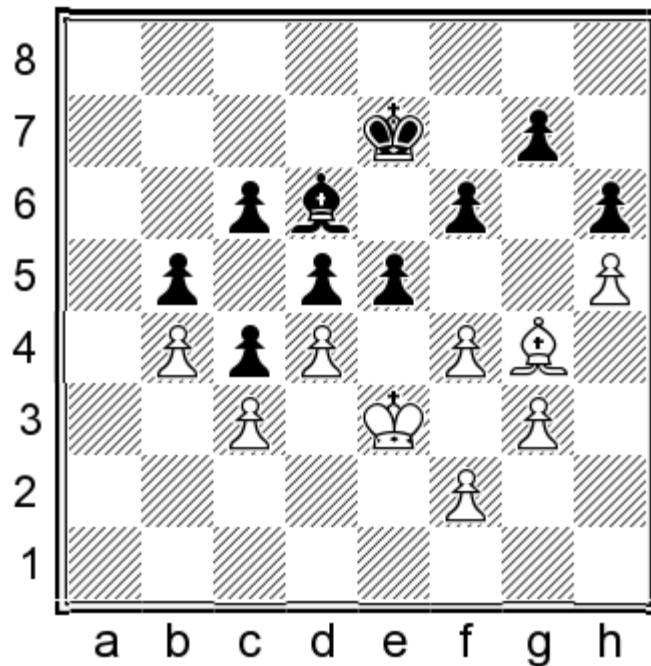
A very nice and difficult move! It is always a very tough decision to enter a position with opposite-coloured bishops. It turns out that the white pawns on the queenside will be very weak after the break with ...e5!

27. ♖xf3 ♔f7

It's necessary first to bring the king to the center in order to defend the pawns on the queenside. 27...e5? is too early  
 28.fxe5 fxe5 29.♗g4=

28. ♗g4 ♔e7 29.h4 h6 30.h5 e5!

Finally! Everything is well-prepared for the break in the center!



## 31.fxe5

Of no help is 31. ♖f5 exd4+ 32. ♗xd4 ♗d8 33. ♕e6 ♕b8! switching to the diagonal a7-g1, after which Black is able to push ...d4 34. ♗e3 (34. ♗c5 ♗c7 mating) 34... ♕a7+ 35. ♗e2 d4 36. cxd4 ♕xd4—

## 31...fxe5 32.f4 exd4+ 33.♗xd4 ♗d8!

In the endgame the king plays a very important role!

## 34.♕e6 ♗c7 35.♕f7 ♕e7 36.♕e8 ♗b6

The winning plan is ...♕f6 and then...c5!

## 0–1

### V. Kramnik (2801) — N. Grandelius (2649)

Stavanger Stavanger (1), 19.04.2016

This game was played between the ex-World Champion, a well-known deep thinker and great technical player, and the talented young Swedish player. After the opening Nils chose the wrong plan of entering a slightly worse endgame, after which Kramnik demonstrated his impeccable chess technique! The biggest problem from Black's perspective was the position of his king. Persistent defense from Black was not sufficient in the end.

## 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♕f4 d5 3.e3 e6 4.c3 c5 5.♗d2 ♗c6 6.♕d3

With 6.♕d3 Kramnik chooses an older plan, one which was used in the past by Vlatko Kovacevic! About this more is written in chapter 4.

## 6...♕d6 7.♕xd6 ♗xd6 8.f4

This is the point! White plays f4 before ♗gf3!

## 8...cxd4!

Black uses the right moment to take on d4 after which White must take back with his c-pawn (much better would be to recapture exd4 for White).

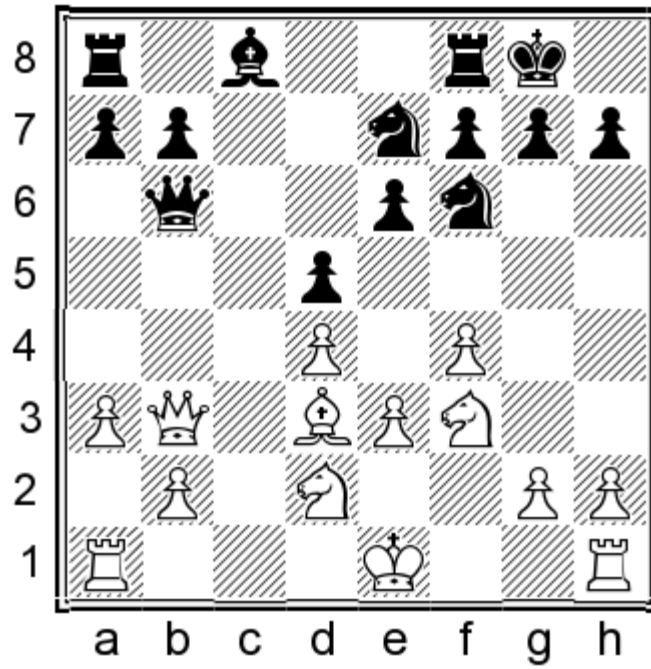
## 9.cxd4 0-0 10.a3

Always useful to prevent ...♗b4.

## 10...♗e7 11.♗gf3 ♗b6?!

Forcing an endgame against Kramnik? Black could continue more actively with 11...♗f5! 12. ♗e2 ♗g4 13. ♕xf5 (13. ♗f1 ♗b6! 14.h3 ♗f6 15.g4 ♗d6 when Black has nice control of the e5 square and the plan could be ...♕d7-♕b5 exchanging his bad bishop for the strong colleague on d3!) 13...exf5 14.h3 ♗f6 15.0-0 a5= and the idea is ...b6-♕a6 activating the bishop!

## 12.♗b3!



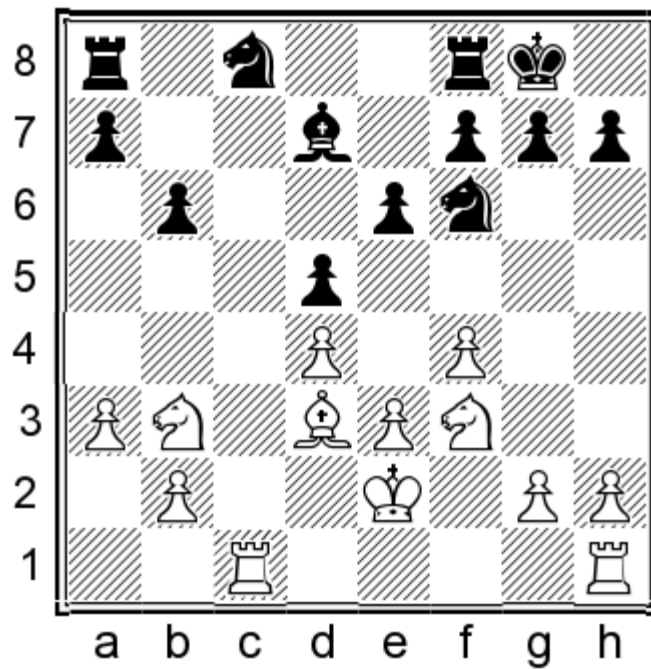
Why not! White's king is better placed closer to the center.

12... ♛xb3 13. ♞xb3 ± b6

Covering the c5 square!

14. ♞c1 ♜d7 15. ♚e2 ♞c8!

A typical maneuver! Black seeks the best place for his knight!

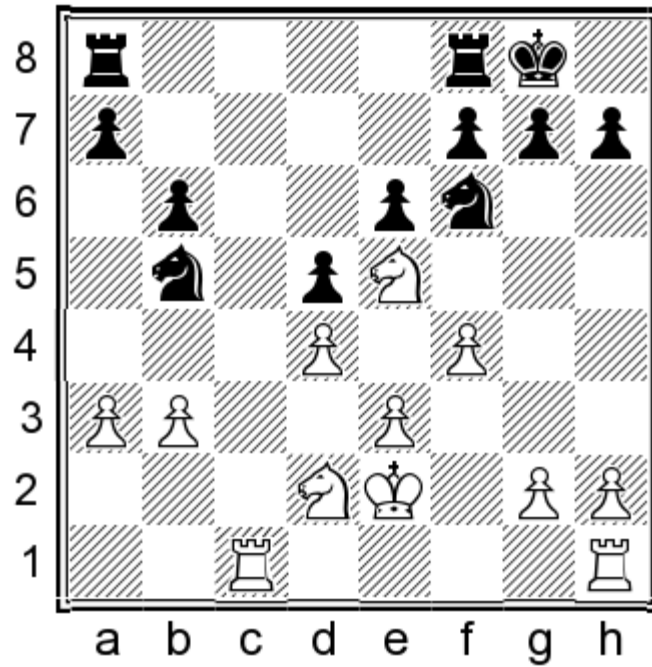


He cannot successfully fight for the c-line with 15... ♞fc8 16. ♜a6! ♞xc1 17. ♞xc1 ♜c8 18. ♜d3 ±

16. ♞e5 ♜a4 17. ♞d2 ♞d6

With this maneuver Black's knight takes up the best place, with the aim of exchange bishop via b5 square.

18.b3 ♘b5 19.♙xb5 ♞xb5

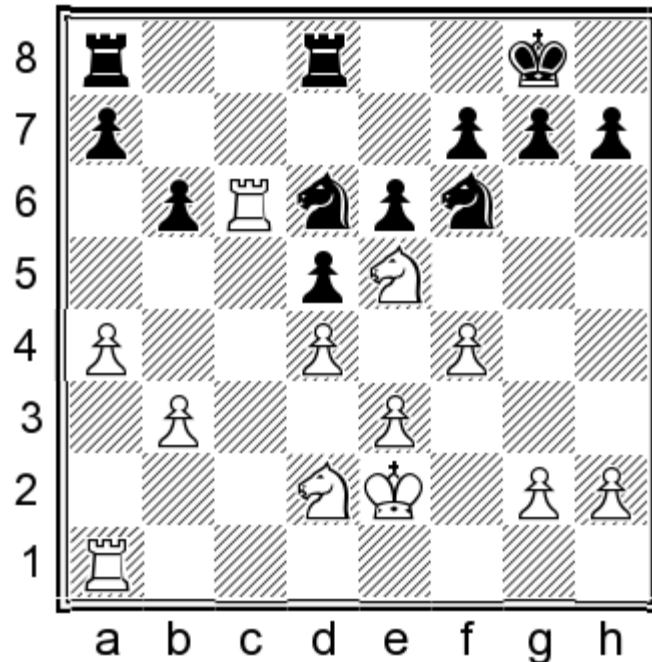


Black has exchanged his the worst piece but still hasn't equalized as c-file is under White's control and also the c6 square — again pay attention to the king's position!

20.a4 ♞d6 21.♙c6

All with tempo! White has to play energetically so as not to lose the initiative!

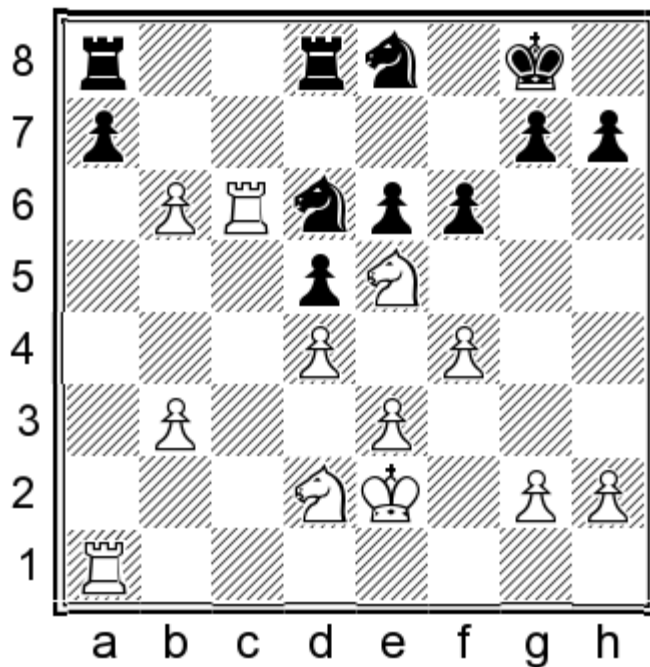
21...♙fd8 22.♙a1!?



An interesting and unthematic solution! Kramnik aims to create weaknesses on the queenside in Black's position. Doubling rooks with 22.♖hc1 also brings an advantage for White: 22...♗fe8 23.b4 f6 24.♗d3 ♕f7 25.b5± with unpleasant pressure. The pawn a7 becomes a target in the future after ♗b4-♗c6.

**22...♗fe8 23.a5 f6 24.axb6!**

An important intermediate move after which the knight from e5 enters the heart of Black's position!



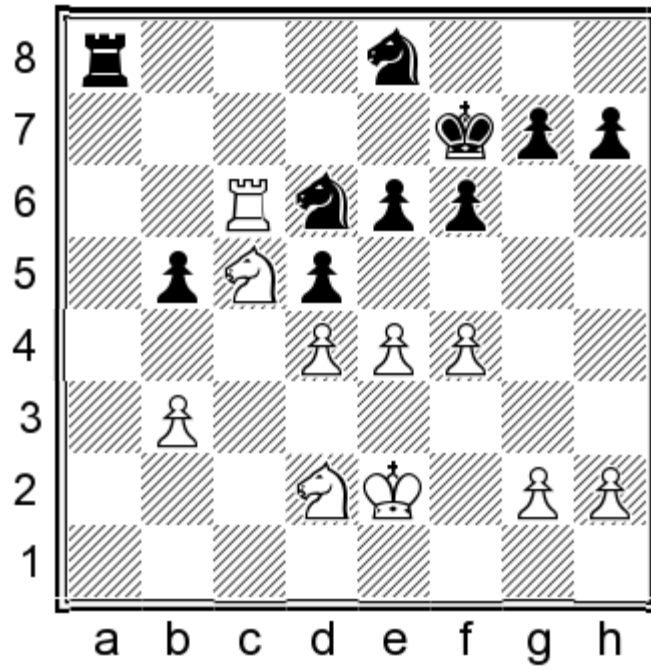
**24...axb6**

Accepting the challenge wouldn't be a good idea 24...fxe5 25.dxe5 ♗e4 26.bxa7± and White has too many pawns for the knight, one of them on the 7th rank!

**25.♖xa8 ♖xa8 26.♗d7 b5 27.♗c5**

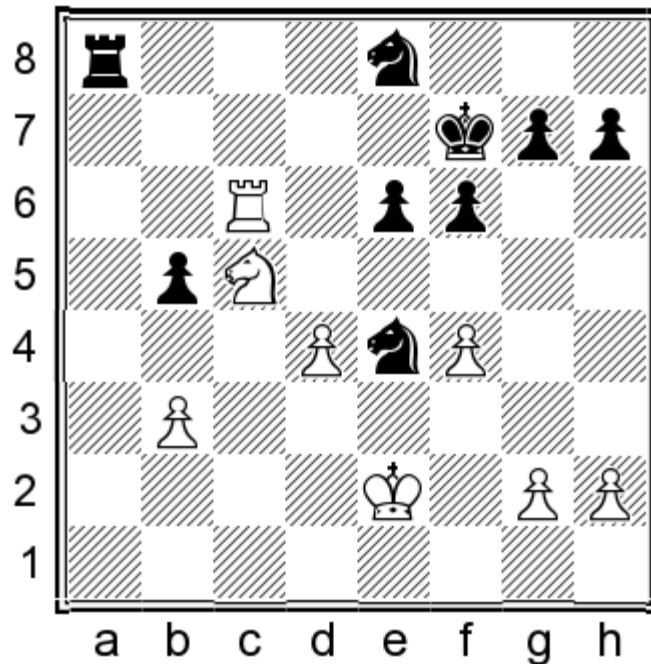
After a couple of forced moves, White has obtained a powerful point for the knight.

**27...♕f7 28.e4!?**



White takes action! 28.g4!? was an interesting option with the idea of staking even more space and keeping the tension. 28...♖a2 29.♔d3 ♖a1 30.♞b6 ♞h1 31.♘f3±

28...dxe4 29.♘dxe4 ♘xe4?!



Until this moment Black has defended his position successfully, but now after constant pressure an inaccurate move appears. Black missed a way of making strong counterplay after 29...♖a2+ 30.♔f3 ♘f5! 31.♘xe6 ♘h4+ 32.♔g3 ♘xg2 33.♘c3 ♖b2 34.♘d5 ♘e1!=

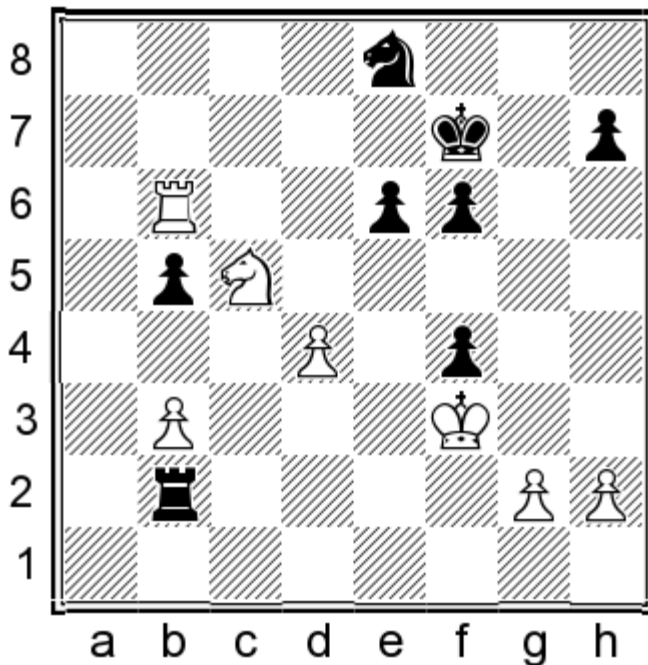
30.♘xe4 ♖a2+ 31.♔f3 ♖b2 32.♘c5 g5!?

What else? Black can't wait anymore -he needs to bring the knight into the game somehow!

### 33. ♖b6!?

Another possibility was 33.fxg5 fxg5 34.h3 (34. ♖xe6?! ♖xb3±) 34... ♗f6 35. ♖b6 ♖d2 36. ♖xb5 h5!± and still Black has chances to save the game due to his active pieces and the reduced position. (36... ♖xd4? 37. ♖b7+ ♔g6 38. ♖g7+! ♔h6 39. ♖xg5!±)

### 33...gxf4?



The first serious mistake after which the position is hopeless for Black. The right move was 33...g4+! 34. ♔xg4 (34. ♔g3 ♗g7!±) 34... ♖xg2+ 35. ♔f3 ♖xh2 36. ♗xe6 ♖h3+ 37. ♔e4 ♖xb3 38. ♔d5± and Black still has to solve the problem of his knight on e8.

### 34. ♖b7+! ♔g6 35. ♗xe6

Now Black's king is in danger!

### 35...♔f5

35... ♖xb3+ loses after 36. ♔xf4 with the unpleasant threat of ♗f8-♖h7

### 36. ♗c5 ♖c2

Nothing helps now: 36... ♖d2 37. ♖d7± and knight is cut from the game or 36... ♗d6 37. ♖d7 ♗c8 38. ♖xh7+—

### 37. ♗e4 ♗c7 38. ♖b6 ♗d5 39. ♖d6!

And the worst Black piece in the game finally falls! A very good game from the ex-World Champion!

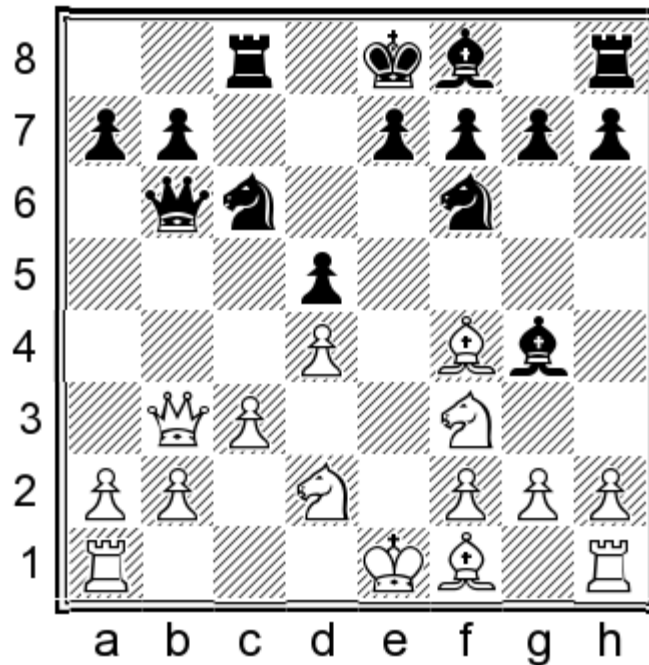
1–0

This game is not so theoretically important and mainly I would like to use it to explain the endgames which arise in these structures. In this game we see the Carlsbad structure! Here, mostly the exchange of queens comes after the moves ♖b3-♗b6 which gives a pleasant and prospectful endgame to White. In this game Anthony Miles showed how you have to use White's resources in this kind of endgame. Unfortunately, at the end he failed to crown his excellent play with a win! This is a game we can connect with chapter 1.

1.d4 d5 2.♙f4 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♗d2 ♖b6 6.♗c2

A little reminder, from chapter 3. I prefer 6.♗b3, but as I said, in this chapter we have illustrative games about typical endgames!

6...cxd4 7.exd4 ♙g4 8.♗gf3 ♞c8 9.♗b3!

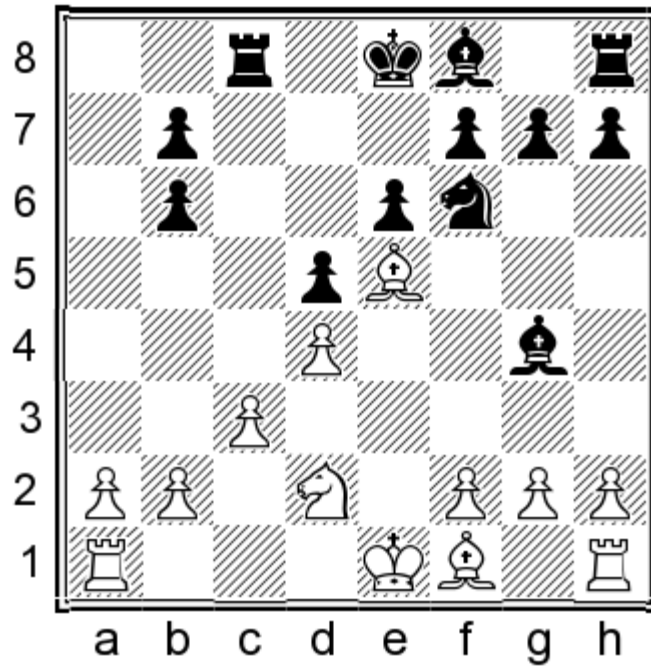


Anthony Miles had a great feel for these structures. He could evaluate exactly which endgames were promising for him and what to do in them.

9...e6

At this point Black had a difficult decision: to choose between two bad endgames. Finally he decided to enter the one with doubled pawns. 9...♗xb3?! brings Black nothing good either: 10.axb3 a6 (10...e6 11.♗e5 a6 (11...♗xe5? 12.dxe5 ♗h5 13.♙e3±) 12.♗xg4 ♗xg4 13.b4 ♙e7 14.♗b3±) 11.b4 e6 12.b5 axb5 13.♙xb5 ♗d7 14.h3 ♙h5 15.g4 ♙g6 16.♗e5! ♗dxe5 17.♙xe5±

10.♗e5 ♗xe5 11.♗xb6 axb6 12.♙xe5±



Black's pawn structure is damaged on the queenside but White doesn't have an open file for exploiting it. Without a concrete plan, Black will not feel the weaknesses.

**12...♖d7 13.♙b5 ♘d8 14.♙g3 ♗b8!?**

Black improves his knight's position and also attempts to prevent White's plan with a4-a5, but unfortunately for him it's simply unstoppable!

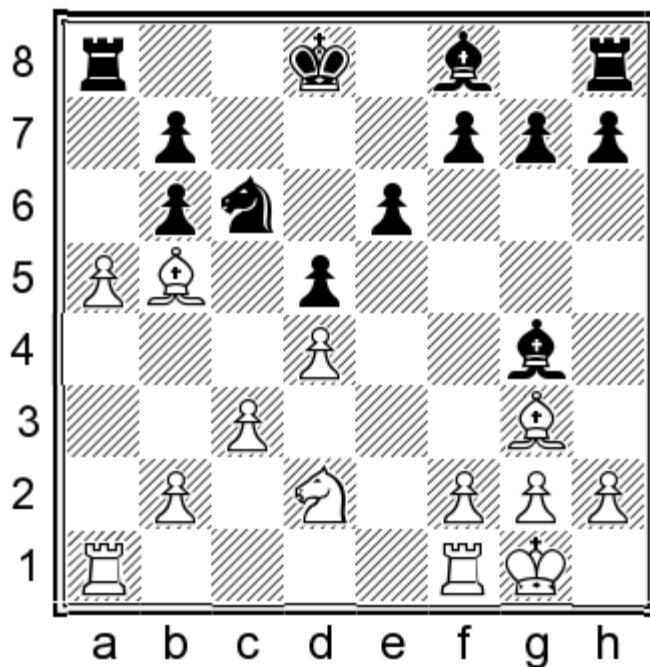
**15.0-0 ♗c6 16.a4!**

White starts a very strong plan on the queenside. Although it's an endgame, Black's king is not safe and White plans to use that factor.

**16...♞a8**

16...♙e7 17.♗b3 ♙f6 18.a5 ♗xa5 19.♗xa5 bxa5 20.♞xa5±

**17.a5!±**



One pawn is not a big loss if you develop an initiative: time is more important. If you play slowly however, your opponent has a chance to consolidate his position. 17. ♖b3 ♗a5±

### 17...bxa5

Black had no better option! 17... ♖xa5 18. ♖xa5 ♗xa5 (18... bxa5 19. ♖a1 ♗d7 (19... ♗a7 20. ♖xa5 ♗xb5 21. ♖xb5 ♗c8 22. ♖a5±) 20. f3 ♗f5 21. ♗b3 ♗d6 (21... b6 22. ♗xa5! bxa5 23. ♖xa5+-) 22. ♗xc6+ bxc6 23. ♖xa5±) 19. ♖a1! f6 20. b4 ♗c6 21. ♖a8+ ♗e7 (21... ♗d7 22. ♖b8+-) 22. f3 ♗f5 23. ♖c8+-

### 18. ♗b3 ♗e7 19. ♖a2!

A nice move with the idea of doubling rooks! Regaining the pawn with 19. ♗xc6? means a return to life for Black! 19... bxc6 20. ♗xa5 ♗d7=

### 19... ♗c8 20. ♖fa1 ♗d8 21. ♗c5!

White continues his brilliant play and he is still not interested in the pawn. His idea is b4! 21. ♗xc6? leads to a draw! 21... bxc6 22. ♗xa5 ♖xa5 23. ♖xa5 ♗xa5 24. ♖xa5 ♗b7=

### 21... ♗b6

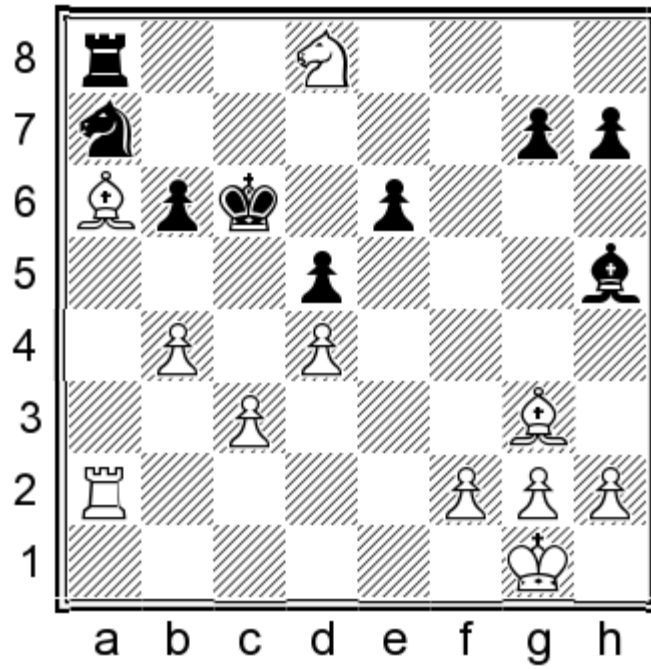
In case of the passive 21... ♗b8 with the idea of ...b6, comes 22. b4 b6 23. ♗b3 ♗b7 24. bxa5 bxa5 25. c4!→ and his king is in big danger!

### 22. b4 ♗a7

After this move White wins material, but it's very hard to find a better option for Black. For example: 22... ♗xc5 23. dxc5 or 23... e5 (23... f6 24. ♗d6 e5 25. bxa5 ♗b8 26. a6 bxa6 (26... ♗xa6 27. c6+-) 27. c4 d4 (27... dxc4 28. ♗xc4 ♖a7 29. ♖b1 ♗c6 30. ♖b6 ♗d7 31. f3 ♗f5 32. g4 ♗g6 33. ♖axa6 ♖xa6 34. ♖b7+ ♗d8 35. ♗xa6+-) 28. c6 ♖a7 29. ♖b2+- with ♗a4 next) 24. ♗d3 f6 25. f3 ♗e6 26. b5 ♗d8 27. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 28. ♖xa5±

### 23. ♗d7!





A pity! White gives his opponent some microscopic chances. More precise was 30.♖e5+! ♔c7 31.♗d3+ ♔d7 (31... ♔c6 32.b5+ ♔d7 33.♗e5+ ♔e7 34.♙b7+-) 32.♙b7+- with the idea b5-♗b4

**30...♞xd8 31.♙d3 ♗b5**

Black is a pawn down, but it seems as though he has never stood better than he does now!

**32.f3?!**

Starting to lose the advantage step-by-step. White could take another pawn with 32.♙xh7! g6 33.♙e5 ♞e8 34.g4 ♙xg4 35.♙xg6 ♞g8 36.♙h7+-

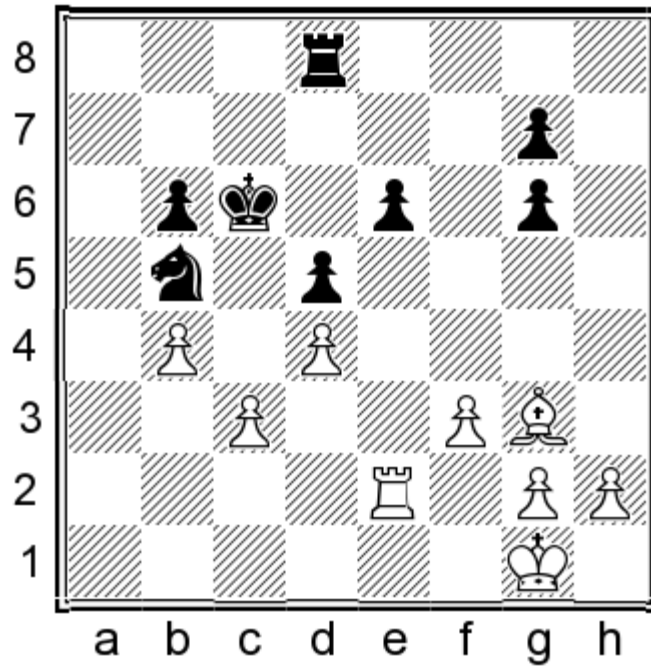
**32...♙g6±**

Now Black is almost back to life!

**33.♙xg6**

Entering the endgame with opposite-coloured bishops is always a questionable decision. 33.♙xb5+ ♔xb5 34.♞a7 ♔c4 35.♞c7+ ♔d3 36.♙e5 b5 37.♙xg7 ♞a8 38.h4 ♞a1+ 39.♔h2 ♞a3 40.♞c6 ♞xc3 41.♞xe6 ♞c2 42.♔g3 ♔c4 with some chances for a draw!

**33...hxg6 34.♞e2?**



With a series of inaccurate moves White casts a shadow on his previous brilliant moves! It was very important to control the a-file. By taking the a-file Black can create counterplay. White could still win with 34.♙e1! ♖c8 35.♙f2 ♙b7 (35... ♙d7 36.♙e3 ♖c7 37.♙d3+-) 36.♞e2 ♖c6 37.h4+- and nothing can stop the white king from going to g5

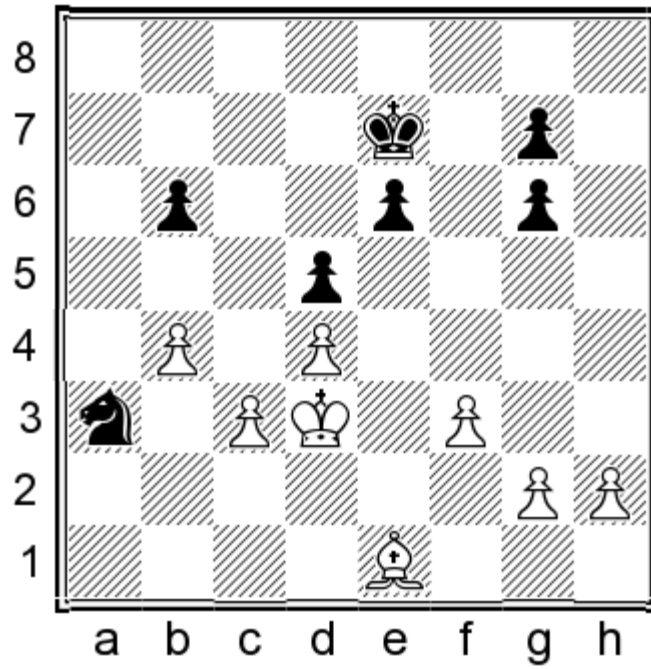
**34...♙d7 35.♙e1 ♖c8 36.♞e3 ♖a8±**

Now White's advantage is purely symbolic and the draw is not far off.

**37.♙f2 ♖a2+ 38.♞e2 ♖xe2+!**

Black does not miss his chance to save the game!

**39.♙xe2 ♙e7 40.♙d3 ♘a3=**



The fortress is a necessity. After ...b5-♖c4-♔f7 white can only dream about the win! White's king cannot enter between the Black pawns!

**41. ♖h4+ ♔e8 42. b5!?**

A last try but unsuccessful. The rest of the game was just waiting for a draw offer!

**42... ♖xb5 43. ♔c2 ♖d6 44. ♔b3 ♖c4 45. ♖g5 ♔d7 46. ♖f4 ♔c6 47. h4 ♔d7 48. ♔b4 ♔c6 49. ♔b3 ♔d7 50. ♔b4 ♔c6**

1/2

# CONCLUSION

I hope that by reading the first book I have ever written you managed to make a connection with the very cunning London System — an opening which I always keep very close to my heart, having played it for over 10 years!

I also strongly believe that I have managed to fill the book with all of my knowledge and understanding of the London System, which in turn will give you a solid edge even against much stronger players, and from the very first moves!

In my opinion, it is an extremely strong weapon in a practical game — and the “simple looking positions” which arise are much harder to understand than they appear at first sight and actually contain huge potential.

I hope you will enjoy winning with the Modern London System at least as much as I do!



**Nikola Sedlak** was born in Subotica (Serbia) in 1983. His best rating is 2605. Grandmaster since 2003. Winner of many open tournaments. He started to play the London System in 2005 and plays it with big success even nowadays.

**Best tournament results:**

Serbian Individual Champion in 2010.

Gold medalist on the 4th board of the Chess Olympiad in Tromsø, 2014.

GM Ferenc Berkes, best ELO 2706 in 2011.

Thanks to my good friend Nikola, by 2008 I already knew that 2... $\text{Qf4}$  was more complex than its reputation. Since the Olympiad in Dresden that year I have played it regularly — and with success. I was always amazed by how creative Nikola was during this period, discovering many new ideas. I can wholeheartedly recommend this extremely good and user-friendly book to anyone that wants to learn lesser-known but complex structures.

€ 24.95

ISBN 978-83-944290-9-6



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